Volume 2 • Issue 3 • February 1997

PS Extreme

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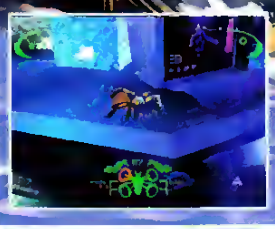

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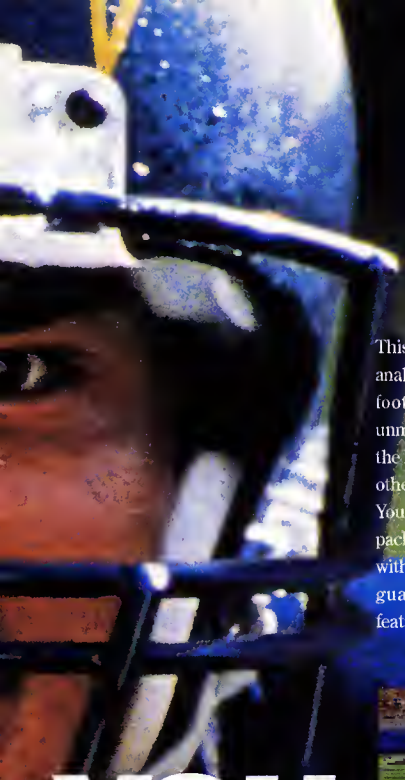

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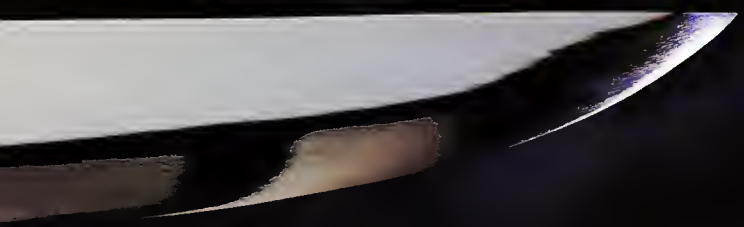

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VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 3
FEBRUARY, 1997

IN THE EXTREME

EXNEWS: Page 16
PSExtreme goes online, Single Trac turns publisher and PlayStation scores well with kids.

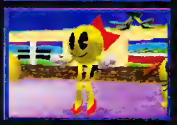
EXECUTE: Page 20
Cheats: Rebel Assault II, Area 51, NBA Jam Extreme, Time Commando, Soviet Strike, Tomb Raider, GameBreaker, Die Hard, Contra, Star Gladiator, Triple Play '97, Pandemonium, Destruction Derby 2. Strategies: Bubsy 3D. Fungus: None.

EXCLUSIVE: Page 32
This month we talk candidly with ASC's driving force, David Klein, about what the future looks like through the eyes of a true visionary and a gentleman.

EXPECTING: Page 36
War Gods, Megaman 8, Swagman, Carnage Heart, Rally Cross, Sentient and Command & Conquer all for you and only you, baby.

EXTREME: Page 46
Mechwarrior II packs enough power to pop the little green LED clean off your PlayStation. (No, not literally, that'd be cause for alarm!)

EXRATED: Page 48
Sixteen games reviewed all in a row, no breaks, no pauses, no excuses. Check it out.



SO, DAVE...

EDITORIAL

TELL US WHAT YOU REALLY THINK

The beauty of having a monthly space to air whatever random thoughts plague me -- this month: "Games I Still Play".

One of the negatives of playing games for the purpose of critiquing them is that you are not able to enjoy the game in the way that the designers intended. Editorial deadlines always rule supreme and, for the purpose of getting the job done, you focus on the details of the game, with precious little time left for playing the game "just for fun".

Consequently, one of the best ways to judge a game comes many months after the review is done, and that is by looking at those games that are now six months old (at least) and identifying the ones that you are still pulling off of the shelf. My list is as follows:

1. Die Hard Trilogy
2. The Need for Speed
3. Road Rash
4. Return Fire
5. Alien Trilogy
6. Bust-a-Move 2

Obviously, this is a very personal list and does not include some great games. For example, NFL GameDay and Resident Evil are not represented — GameDay has been replaced by NCAA GameBreaker and GameDay '97 and Resident Evil is an adventure that, once finished, you are unlikely to play again (at least not for awhile). Also, games like Crash Bandicoot and Tekken 2 are still too new and are an active part of our everyday life at Dimension Publishing. The six games mentioned above are the ones that I regularly put in my briefcase and take home for the evening. Why? I'll answer that game by game.

1. Die Hard Trilogy: It was really hard for us not to give an Extreme Award to this game. It is so good in so many areas. It ended up with a bunch of honorable mentions, but not the big prize. The key word in DHT is 'value'. Each of the three arcade games could stand alone and sell for $40-$50. The more I've played it, the more I realize that the third-person action game, based on the original Die Hard movie, is my favorite, with the driving game coming a close second.

2. The Need for Speed: There are a ton of PlayStation driving games, but none has captured my attention as much as EA Canada's exceptional racer. I could drive the Ferrari through the mountain course all day long and I still think that the sense of speed and the impact when slamming into an on-coming vehicle feels "real". The game is almost a year old now and it is still one of the best looking PS games.

3. Road Rash: While Road Rash is not the technological giant that it once was, the gameplay is perfect for when you just want to pick up a game, no-brainer it, and cruise. While a little dated, the game still looks good and I still get a thrill over whacking the other riders off of their bikes.

4. Return Fire: This is one of the best two player games ever, and also enjoyable as a one player game. The wide variety of scenarios and the competitive 'capture the flag' gameplay make Return Fire a game that will still be fun to play when you are upgrading to PlayStation 3.

5. Alien Trilogy: An Extreme Award winner, Alien Trilogy is one movie license that lives up to its billing. There are many 'Doom clones' on the market, but none draws you into its world like Alien Trilogy ... and there are enough levels and variety where you don't play the game for a few months, come back to it, and play it as if it were new. The aliens are pixilized, but I can forgive Probe for that one.

6. Bust-a-Move 2: Ah, the ONE game that my wife and I can play together. No zippie technology, no awesome soundtrack, just gameplay, gameplay, gameplay. We probably boot BM2 up three or four times a month and the game is always competitive — simple to get into and difficult to master.

One thing that you may notice in this short list is that none of these games are deep, involving affairs. It seems that every new generation of gaming brings with it those who wish for the "good ol' days" when gameplay was "simple and addictive." I think this list stands as testimony to the fact that the concept of fun before technology is alive and well on the PlayStation. If you haven't played some of these games, I invite you to check them out, I think you'll be glad you did.

Dave

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Dear PSExtreme,

Wow, as if I wasn't completely hyped up about it to begin with, Dave's awesome review of Tomb Raider in the December issue made the wait that much tougher. Now I just have to hope someone takes my hints and gets me TR for Christmas.

Maybe you can help with a couple of decisions I'm facing. First, I'm looking to pick up another first-person shooter. I think Alien Trilogy rocked, but I've finally exhausted most of its potential. The problem is (and this sure is a nice problem to have), there are so many games in this genre that I'm not sure where to invest my limited funds. Final Doom sounds alright, Disruptor sounds great, and though I have not yet seen your Dark Forces review, I'm assuming that's another good one. If it were between these three, the decision wouldn't be so tough, but I also have to consider the upcoming Broken Helix, Power Slave, Duke Nukem, Tenka, and Quake. I know that it's probably hard for you to comment on incomplete titles, but from your current perspective, should I go ahead and plunk down my money on a title like Disruptor, or should I hold out for something REALLY great?

Second, there are now several games (e.g. NHL Face-Off '97 and Pitball) which are multi-tap compatible. I love multi-player games, but I'm skeptical about the playability of some of these games as the number of players increases, particularly those sports games that allow an astonishing 8 players. Have you had much experience with this peripheral, and is it worth it?

Thanks for your input,
Carter Maxwell

P.S. I've been a subscriber for 8 months now, and every issue just keeps getting bigger (lote bigger) and better. Keep up the great work.

All of those games are really good. If you've only got the fundage for one game, and you're ready to buy right now, toss a coin for either Disruptor or Powerslave. The ones that aren't available yet aren't such a leap above the rest that they're worth waiting for. You can always rent them when they come out if you can't afford a purchase. As far as eight player games go, to be honest, we've never had eight people together in a room long enough to start a game. Four players is much more feasible and highly enjoyable.

Dear Mr. Winding,

First of all, I wholeheartedly agree with your assessement of "Madden '97." The game was a major disappointment and "NCAA Gamebreaker", on the other hand, was a very pleasant surprise.

But, I must get to something that really ticked me off in the December 1996 issue. What, you ask? It was Eric's review of EA's "NHL '97", 89%? Please! How about 69%? Dave, in your statement to us, the readers, you stressed how all the glitz and fancy broadcast style quality in games can never make up for lack of gameplay. So, why did Eric give "NHL '97" an 89%? Nowhere, I repeat, nowhere did Eric ever mention anything good about the gameplay of "NHL '97". He could only stress the graphics and broadcast style presentation. In fact, the only time he mentioned gameplay was regarding how bad it was — slow-moving, inaccurate computer AI, the time frame, lack of fighting and emotionless announcer. What about the fact that "NHL '97" never even bothered to update the player rosters and thet you can't save edited lines?

I bought the game and thought it was so poorly done that I returned it the next day. How disappointing that was after my long wait.

Dave, you mentioned the term "Homer" in your statement. I was one of those "Homer's" up until this year. I owned all of EA's versions of Madden and NHL series for the Genesis and I enjoyed them immensely. The reason that I mention this is because I don't want you to think that I am a SONY Sports worshipper.

If you are wondering if I agreed with Eric's "NHL Face-Off '97" review, yes I do. The game is great except for the fact that all the wrong players get into fights and the fourth line (enforcer line) is once again missing.

So, please don't be hypocritical in your magazine. Either state it like it is or don't bother.

Thanks for your time,
Sergei Zuran

That's some really great feedback, Sergei. Thanks.

Dear PSExtreme,

First, I want to tell you guys that I love your magazine. I haven't missed an issue yet. I really like how you tell it like you see it. I am writing about your sports game ratings. I sometimes wonder if you guys ever play sports in real life. I have played Gameday and beat the computer 70 to 28 on the hardest level the first time I played it. I have both NHL Face Offs and completely destroy the computer on All-Star level. NBA Shoot Out is a joke. The players look like monkeys running around, NBA Live 96 while not perfect by any means is a far superior game. One reason I can beat the computer so easily is that usually within 5 minutes I find a play or strategy that works every time. In Gameday I used a goal line play and I got at least 38 yards every time. In the first Face Off I just went up the ice on the right side of the net and shot a simple wrist shot and it would go in 50% of the time. In Face Off 97 all you have to do is skate around the net and when you're just past the red circle shoot a slap shot to the lower opposite side and the only way it won't go in is if another player beside the goalie deflects it. I scored 30 goals in one game and didn't miss one of them. I want you to know that I am not slamming your magazine. The only ratings I think you are off base on are the sports.

Ken Caud
via the Internet

P.S. You can use those tips in your EXECUTE section.

That's some really great feedback, Ken. Thanks.

Dear Ben,

I was innocently reading the review for PSEx's version of KoF'95 and, like Ben said, "as I got about thirty seconds into it, I got that feeling..." You were purposely telling folks to avoid this game as if it were the plague. Well, I am completely overwhelmed with disappointment and bottled rage that you people passed judgement on this game without actually seeing it for what it is. I've got my reasons, of course.

The combos in KoF'95 are all there. It's just that your editor, Ben Cureton, doesn't know how to work it. I'm sorry Ben, but you just don't know jack about combos, especially those in KoF'95. I can do over 130 basic combos with all the players in KoF'95. That's *basic* now...

The sound in King of Fighters, although mediocre, is not as bad as you describe. Bus station microphones are a bit fan... The sound however, matches, if not, is better than, the Neo Geo's version of '94 and '95. The music is also nice. I don't understand how you could think that they're both that horrible. Now, on the subject for character grunts and *kiais*. I know that you are, in fact, a *gaikokujin* (the polite way to say "foreigner") to the Japanese, so you most likely wouldn't understand how their every day life goes. in martial arts, a kial is an essential, symbollzing the release of their pressure and ki. Even in their comic books and animation there are grunting and kiais. Don't lie to me and tell you that you've never heard the same from the Street Fighters or even Tekken. The kials and grunts are all there, and yet I hear no complaints about it... hmmm... Another thing that I've noticed is the loading time of KoF versus other PSX loading times. KoF has an average load time of 7.32 (Yes, I sat through one whole game session, just timing the loading times) seconds versus the average 17.87 seconds of Street Fighter Zero/Alpha (although my copy of Zero 2 matches the loading time of KoF). But my point is that there is another game with more loading time to it, and that KoF rarely ever needs to load in an excess of twenty seconds. The most it has loaded up on my machine is 22.38 seconds, and that was because I had been playing it for four hours straight, and because it's a first generation Japanese PlayStation that's gone through many hours of play each day... you don't even know what the option "Demo Game" means. Its not an option to watch the computer play against itself, its an option to show the game introduction. So Ben, are you convinced yet? Probably not, but hell, it felt good to voice my opinion. The King of Fighter '95 is not just a decent piece, its a masterpiece in many ways. SNK fans would love and respect it, as it is a better version than the original Neo Geo version. The hand drawn animation is beautiful and detailed. The control is tight and the gameplay is solid.

Regards,
Tony Loiseleur

*Ben Replies: I am glad you got the impression that I was trying to make people avoid this game, that was my main intention when I started the review. Anyway, let me break your letter down into its main parts. First, combos. I never said they weren't there, just "almost non-existent". I went through button links and chain links for quite awhile, finding that everyone had the SAME basic combos. Also, the larger combos are really missing from the game. 4 and 5 hits for large combos were left back in SF2 original, we don't need SNK bringing them back! Maybe the reason my best-selling fighting game strategy guides are so popular, is because of the witty text and cool use of analogies! Next we have the Kias. Yes, SF2 and Tekken series have them, but not after EVERY SINGLE hit. I've taken 5 different forms of martial arts, and Kias were used during important strikes, not every strike. Sure, during striking practice, they DO make you Kia after each hit, but not during sparring. Now, load times. Well, we at DP have played a few games in our time, and KOF '96 had horrible load times, comparatively. SF2A is much faster with loading than KOF '96, and Tekken 2 blows them both away. Well, this gaikokujin isn't convinced. Maybe SNK fans would love and respect it. I personally bought a NEO GEO for the original KOF, and Greg also has a NEO GEO. Neither of us love it. The animation and detail come nowhere close to SFA2... and the control isn't what it should be... better. Wrapping this up, I think out of all the PSEx reviewers, I did harbor the most respect for it. Sorry, but if anyone else had gotten it, it probably would have been rated lower. We appreciate and acknowledge your concern and the time you took to write in and express your opinion; but, I must tell you that when I review a game, I direct the article to the average PSX owner, not SNK fans. Thanx for the mail! *Kiss**

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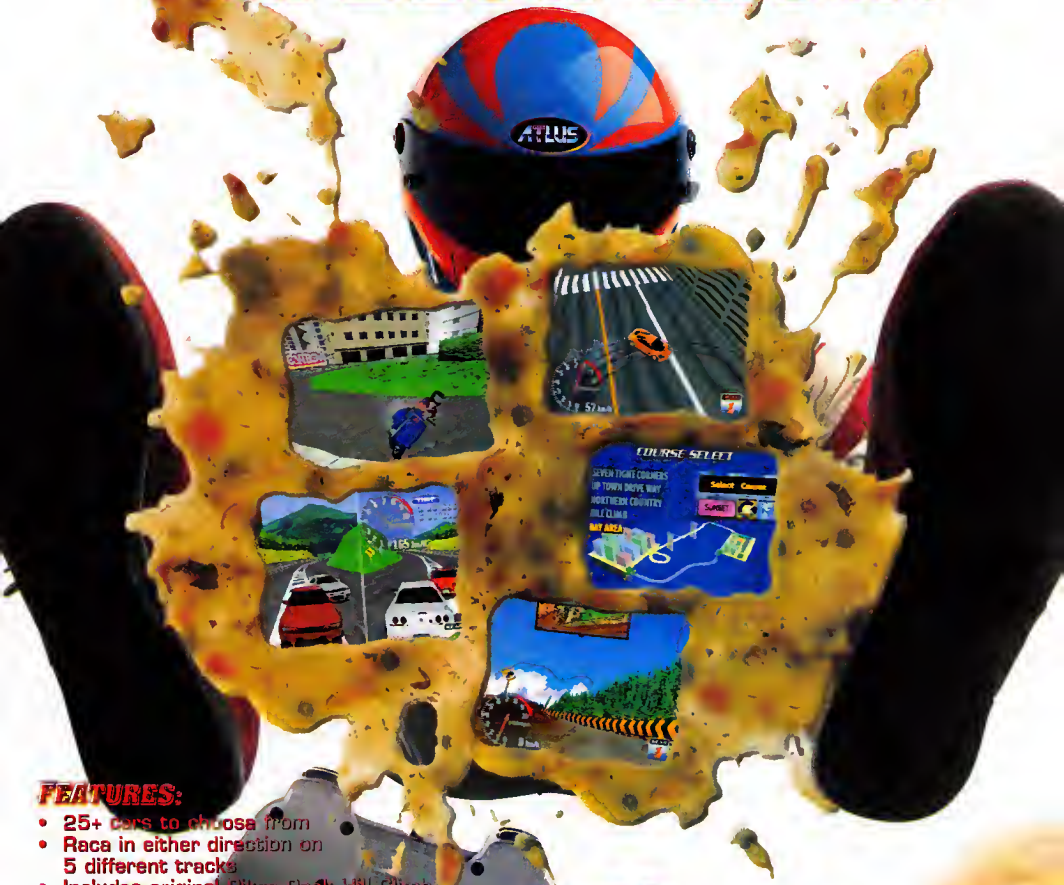

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PlayStation Gaming News From Around The Globe

PLAYSTATION DOMINATES THE CBS TOY TEST

While Zach was up much too early a few weeks back, he stumbled upon CBS This Morning, on which the so-happy-ya-wanna-strangle-her co-host introduced the results of the show's 7th Annual Toy Test. CBS set up a mini-E3 at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle, Washington, with 57 games for various 16-bit and 32-bit systems. Hordes of children and adults poured into the display and rated the games for CBS, which tallied over 10,000 ratings during the display's three-week run. The top ten:

1. Super Maria 64 (Nintenda/Nintenda 64)
2. Crash Bandicoot (Sany/PlayStatian)
3. Tekken 2 (Namca/PlayStatian)
4. Project: Harned Owl (Sany/PlayStatian)
5. Virtua Cap 2 (Sega/Saturn)
6. Pilatwings 64 (Nintenda/Nintenda 64)
6. Tabal Na. 1 (Sany/PlayStatian)
8. Donkey Kang Country 3 (Nintendo/Super NES)
9. Panzer Dragoon II (Sega/Saturn)
10. Twisted Metal 2 (Sany/PlayStatian)

The biggest surprise: two light-gun shooters taking the fourth and fifth slots?! Then again, these games would obviously test better over the short term than the long term (and the Science Center was definitely short-term playing time).

CAPCOM: MOVING AND SHAKING

Recently, the longtime president of Capcom, Greg Ballard, left the company to join the management team of 3Dfx, a 3D graphics developer. In an unusual twist, Ballard was joined at 3Dfx by Jim Whims, former executive vice-president at Sony Computer Entertainment of America. Ballard was replaced at Capcom by Tim Harata. Even more recently, Capcom canceled two PlayStation games in development — Major Damage and Werewolf — and laid off ninety employees from the coin-op division. Are these signs that Capcom is in dire straits? Says beloved Capcom spokesbabe Melinda Mongelluzzo: "Oh, God, no." (And Melinda never lies.) The remainder of the coin-op division is relocating to California, where they'll be assimilated in Borg-like fashion, and the American R&D unit is refocusing on other projects. Everything else is running well — in other words, ain't nothin' gonna delay Resident Evil 2.

SINGLE TRAC TO PUBLISH ON PLAYSTATION

One of Sony's premiere developers, Salt Lake City, Utah-based Single Trac, will be publishing its own PS titles in 1997. The developer, best known for the Twisted Metal series, Warhawk and Jet Moto, announced its intentions in a private roundtable discussion with the editors of PSExtreme. During the meeting, Mike Ryder, the company's President, and Todd Kelly, Vice President, outlined their publishing philosophy and offered an initial overview of their 1997 plan. Single Trac will continue to deliver one title per year that will be published by Sony, and they plan to deliver an average of three to four new, original titles each year, beginning at the end of '97. In addition to their PlayStation presence, Single Trac will, in an agreement with Microsoft, also publish titles for Win 95. Look for Single Trac to continue to expand upon their real-time 3D expertise, and for them to branch out into other gaming genres.

ONLINE WITH ZACH

During a recent bit of quality time spent with a Web browser and a Van Halen CD — from the Rath years, of course (is there anyone who DOESN'T despise Hagar?) — I stumbled upon quite the little contraversy regarding Acclaim's recently released Bubble Babble ("Featuring Rainbow Islands," as the subtitle declares). According to the gaming junkies who run the various Bubble Babble tribute sites, the PlayStation conversions are embarrassingly inaccurate. The program code, which was inexplicably taken from flawed computer-game conversions instead of the original coin-ops, is missing several gameplay elements (including three hidden islands in Rainbow Islands!), and it messed with elements that didn't need to be touched, particularly the jump physics.

A group of programmers involved in the project even sent a letter to one of the Bubble Babble tribute sites in which they detailed the incompetence at Probe (the programmers of Bubble Babble), Graftgold (programmers of Rainbow Islands), and Acclaim. It's absolutely scathing stuff, and a bizarre peek underneath the skirt of the gaming industry. It even explains why there's no "Bubble Babble Enhanced" in the collection to complement "Rainbow Islands Enhanced"; it was so badly done that Taito rejected it. Check out the letter at the Bub and Bob Page at http://www.nwlink.com/~faregane/bb/index.html

Let's now segue from bad news to good: PSExtreme Online will have launched by the time you read these words. Designed by yours truly to be visually simple (no 100K GIF animations that take eons to load), easy to browse (no stupid frames), and loaded with content, PSExtreme Online has eight sections that nicely complement the magazine:

EXCAVATE: An exhaustive archive of all the ratings ever dished out in PSExtreme.
EXCLUSIVE: Articles and interviews you'll only find on PSExtreme Online.
EXECUTE: A freakishly large compilation of cheats, codes, and walkthroughs.
EXMAIL: You write. We write back.
EXNEWS: PlayStation information from across this great nation.
EXPECTING: Screen shots and goofy little movies of upcoming PlayStation games.
EXRATED: If a game hasn't been reviewed in the magazine, it's been reviewed here.
EXTERNAL: Web links to anything remotely PlayStation-related.

Check it out at http://www.psextreme.com and tell us what ye think.

You can e-mail your thoughts directly into Zach's brain by addressing your correspondences to:
zmestan@denmark-c.it.earthlink.net

EX NEWS

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PlayStation

SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

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ASCII ENTERTAINMENT

SEND US YOUR CODES AND WIN BIG PRIZES!

Each month we'll pick the best code sent in by our loyal and intelligent readers and send that person a brand spankin' new copy of ASCII's hot new RPG for the PlayStation, King's Field II (that's right, II, the sequel is ready!) or, if fighting's your thing, ASCII's SpecializedStick (you decide.) But wait! That's not all: if you act now, we'll also include ASCII's super stylish SpecializedPad for the PlayStation, for your controlling pleasure, PLUS twelve (12) free issues of the best, the only, monthly dedicated PlayStation magazine, PS*Extreme*, of course! Whoa! That's a lot of cool stuff for just a code; what are you waiting for?

WE HAVE A WINNER!

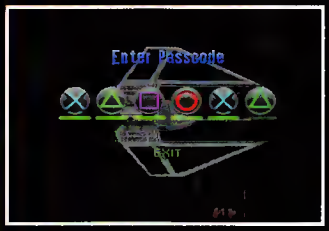
Congratulations and thanks go to this month's winner, James M. DeWitt of Zeigler, IL. He was the dude with the brain big enough to find this awesome Time Commando code. Way to go buddy! You win the goodies!

Time Commando

SECRET FIGHTING MODE:
I was going through my saved codes on my newly bought "Time Commando" game, and I decided to play around with different words. The word "COMMANDO" just fits in the amount of letters they give you so I though I'd give it a shot. It places your character in the center of a ring (like a wrestling or boxing ring) and pits him against various opponents. The moves seem a little different in the "fighter mode" than in the actual game. Pretty cool stuff!

CONTEST RULES: Anyone of any age can enter. The only people not eligible to win are employees of Dimension Publishing or ASCII Entertainment, their friends, family, pets and anyone they talk to or know of. Dimension Publishing reserves the right to make any and all decisions regarding the contest. One winner per month will be chosen, at Dimension Publishing's discretion, based on the code or trick supplied by the entrant. If you win but do not specify, in your code submission, which prize you want to receive (King's Field or an ASCII Specialized Stick), then we will choose for you.

Rebel Assault II

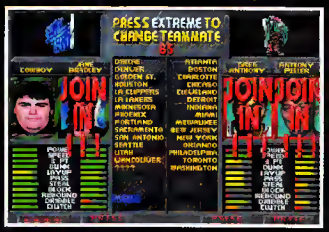


OPEN ALL THE LEVELS: Go to the options screen and choose the "Enter Passcode" option and enter the following code: XAOOXA.
Code supplied by Louis Gonzalez

Area 51

KRONOMORPH MODE: At the beginning of the game, ONLY shoot the first three STAAR Team Members that you see, and you will have infrared vision.
SECRET ROOMS:
Level Two — Hangar
Secret Room 1: CHOW PALACE — Shoot out all of the upper windows of the far back wall in the Hangar.
Secret Room 2: EGG-CELLENT — Make sure that all of the yellow barrels are shot when you are riding on the forklift up until you get to the parked trucks.
Level Four — Airport
Secret Room 1: X-MARKS THE SPOT — Make sure that every yellow box is shot while you are riding in the STAAR jeep.
Level Five — Office
Secret Room 1: HEADQUARTERS — Shoot the door-plate of the second door marked General Weatherby as the door is opening.
Level Seven — Abandoned Base
Secret Room 1: CHOW PALACE — Shoot all of the yellow barrels at the first area where the four purple zombies are throwing barrels on the hill.
Level Eight — Final Showdown / Mothership
Good Ending: Make sure that all panels are shot off the Mothership before it escapes.
Bad Ending: If Mothership escapes without having all panels shot off of it.

NBA Jam Extreme



HIDDEN CHARACTERS:
Junior Seau: JR 6/1
John Elway: WAY 9/30
Marv Albert: MRV 12/31
Frank Thomas: BIG 12/8
Newt Gingrich: NEW 8/12
Pirate Bill: SAL 2/2
Mr. Happy: MJT 3/22
Dufus the Clown: GRR 6/19
Three Feet Under: TOD 4/17
Mr. Unhappy: GEM 11/3
Ooohh: JLH 1/26
Who: WHO 1/1
Brained: BCS 1/7
Monkey Boy: PJP 11/2
Howie: BCE 7/10
Jim Jung: JKJ 12/13
Huh: CBR 6/25
Cheryl Swoopes: SWO 1/1
Rebecca Lobo: LOB 7/4
Carol Blazejowski: BLZ 3/1
Bob Lanier: LAN 9/10
Air Nick: ARN 5/18
George Cervin: ICE 4/47
XX Stinger: MSS 10/26
XX Shamrock: JHG 8/28
Diamond Dave: DJP 6/29
Chris Slate: JCS 12/8
SausageBoy: TVC 10/3
Richard Szeto: RTS 2/25
Dwain Skinner: DAS 2/21
Dave Ross: DJR 6/8
Jeff Peters: JBP 5/17
Daren Smith: DRS 4/10
Mike Callahan: MWC 5/1
The TinMan: TIM 1/24
Mark Canus: MMG 9/16
Roy Wilkins: RNW 9/15
Rob Dautel: RAD 3/19

Proof That Demons Do Exist

In the near future, mankind has conquered dimensional travel but the door we have opened swings both ways. The peaceful city you have grown up in has become a haven for dark creatures from another world— Demons! Now it's up to you and your friends to harness the hidden power within you by entering the fantasy game known as Persona.

You awaken with incredible abilities that you will need to defeat the scores of Demon invaders and cleanse the land of their forces. Converse with them before doing battle to determine your best course of action. Fight them or enlist their aid in your mission. Either way, you are set for the fantasy adventure of a lifetime!

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Persona

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RPG

PlayStation

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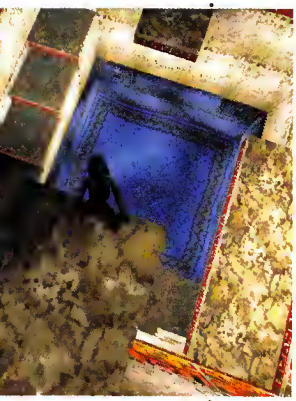
Call 1-800 771-3772 for Game Rating Information.

IF THE GAME GRAPHICS DON'T BLOW YOU AWAY, ONE OF THESE WILL.

GO WHERE NO MAN HAS EVER COME OUT ALIVE. NOTICE WE SAID "MAN."



TREASURE SEEKING, PUZZLE SOLVING, ALLIGATOR WRESTLING, AND STILL TIME FOR A FIGHT.

SOMETIMES, HAVING A

Sometimes, you also need guts. Or a brain. Or quick feet. Other times, you need all of the above plus grenades, a shotgun and a matching pair of nine millimeters. Such is your fate when you control Lara Croft, heroine heartthrob of Tomb Raider.

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NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE SWIM BEFORE FENDING OFF A PACK OF WOLVES.

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Game Fan

"9.5 - Playstation game of the year!"
"Adventure game of the year!"
Ultra Game Players

"99% - Game of the year!"
PS Extreme

KILLER BODY
JUST ISN'T ENOUGH.

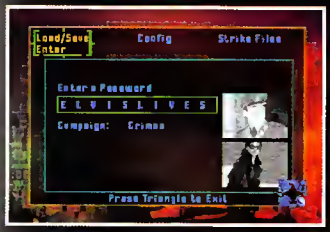
NOT EVERYONE SEES A BRIGHT LIGHT JUST BEFORE DYING. (LUCKY STIFFS.)

Lara has her sights on a few ancient artifacts, and she's not going to let anything or anybody get in her way. Alligators. Wolves. Thugs. They're all tempting fate once in Lara's path. But hey, what's a little temptation? Especially when everything looks this good. In the game, we mean. Check out Tomb Raider at **www.tombraider.com**.

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

TOMB RAIDER™

Soviet Strike



UNLIMITED CHOPPERS: At the password screen, type "ELVISLIVES". Press Press ✕ and you will hear a gunshot.

Code supplied by Joseph Horan

PASSWORDS:
Level 1: WORSTCASE
Level 2: GRANDTHEFT
Level 3: GROZNEY
Level 4: CHERNOBYL
Level 5: CIVILWAR

Tomb Raider

WEAPON CHEATS: Go to your inventory screen and hit the following buttons: L1, △, R2, L2, L2, R2, ○, L1.

NCAA Gamebreaker

More secret passwords. Tap L1, R1, L2, R2 to get to the Easter Egg Screen. Then enter the following passwords for cool stuff: Tight Cover, Big Ref, Slow CPU, Tiny GB, Cannon, Lights Out, Angry CPU, Cruel CPU, Thunder Foot, Little Foot, Fast Clock, Slow Clock, Loose Cover, Swim Down, Blocking Down, Big Foot, Amazons, Jack T, Hammer.

Codes supplied by Barry Beard

Die Hard Trilogy

Pause the game and hold R2 and enter the following codes as quickly as possible.

DIE HARDER:
Invincibility after last hit: ↓, △, →, □.
Super Deformed People: ←, △, →, ↓.

DIE HARD WITH A VENGENCE:
Programmers mode: →, ↑, ↓, □.
Sky Cam: ↓, ○, ↓, ○.
Flying Nitros?: ←, □, △, ↓, □, →.
"Fuzzy Dice": →, ○, ←, ←, □, ↓.
Night Mode: ↓, □, △, →, ↓, □, △, →.
Roswell Mode: Put the curser on "QUIT" before holding R2 on this one: →, □, △, ↓, ✕, ✕, ✕.

Codes supplied by Andy Berger

Contra: Legacy of War

WEAPON SELECT: L2, R2, L1, L2, ↑, ↓, ↓, ↑
UNLIMTTED CONTINUES: L2, R2, L1, R1, ←, →, →, ←
MOVIE PLAYER: L2, L1, R1, R2, ↑, ←, ↓, →
BAMBOO ARCADE: R2, R1, →, ←, L1, L2
BAMBOO GYRUSS: L2, L1, ←, →, R1, R2
SFX BROWSER: R2, R1, L1, L2, ↑, →, ↓, ←

Codes supplied by Erwin Siangco

Star Gladiator

BIG HEAD MODE: After choosing your character, press and hold →, Start, ○ and □. Continue to hold until the round starts. To get "Shrunken Head", use the above code but substitute the → with ←.

Triple Play '97

MYSTERY STADIUM:
Go to the Stadium Select screen and press L1, R1, L1, R1, and hit Start.

Code supplied by Domingo Maurice Cheleuitte

Pandemonium

CHEATING PASSWORDS:
TWISTEYE: Hold L1 & L2 and move the D-Pad left or right to rotate the screen. Pull down to center it again.
THETHING: Hold L2 and press ○ to cycle through odd body shapes. L2 + ✕ switches back to normal.
HARDBODY: Invincibility
BODYSWAP: Press △ to change characters in mid-game.
OTTOFIRE: Permanent weapon.

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PSYGNOSIS

PlayStation

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VITAMINS: 31 Lives
CORONARY: Lots of hearts
BORNFREE: Level select
TOMMYBOY: The pinball bonus round
CASHDASH: Speed bonus round

Destruction Derby 2

ALL THE TRACKS: Go to the name entry screen in championship mode and enter MACSrPOO, then back out and start a new practice race to play the new tracks right away.
CREDIT SCREEN: Go to the name entry screen in championship mode and enter CREDITZ!
FMV CREDIT SCREEN: Go to the name entry screen in championship mode and enter ToNyPaRk.

Bubsy 3D

99 LIVES: Enter the password XMUCHOLIFE.
ALL ROCKET PARTS: Enter the password XTOOROCKER.
BONUS WORLDS: Enter the password XBNSCHTMMM. When you select a level, you're taken to the bonus world instead.
LEVEL SELECT: Enter the password XVLCHTMSB.
LEVEL WARP: Enter the password XOOMMERKB. During the game, press Left and Start at the same time to warp to different areas in the current level.
FIND THE ROCKET PARTS AND BEAT THE BOSSES: Here's how to find all the hidden rocket parts and whip the big bad guys.

CLAWS FOR ALARM
PART #1: Shoot the wall next to the telescope with an atom to find a rocket part on the other side.
PART #2: It's next to the exit and impossible to miss. Really.
CLAWSTROPHOBIC
PART #1: From the start of the level, follow the wall to the right. Look for a gray section of a blue wall. Shoot the gray section to uncover a secret area. Go through the teleporter in the secret area and follow the platforms to the rocket part.
PART #2: From the start of the level, walk straight ahead and climb the first platforms you reach, which are slightly to the left. Follow the platforms to a teleporter; use the teleporter and follow the platforms on the other side to the rocket part.
CATATOMIC CATASTROPHE
PART #1: From the start of the level, walk straight ahead to the three-way junction. Take the right-hand path and follow the left wall to a fan. Ride the fan to the higher level and follow the higher platform path back to the starting area. Use the teleporter and jump into the aircar, which carries you to the rocket part.
PART #2: From the start of the level, walk straight ahead to the three-way junction and take the middle path. Follow the path to a light purple wall and shoot the wall with an atom to reveal a secret area with the rocket part.
WOOLIE NERD
The Nerd shoots fireballs at you from his platform. Dodge each fireball and glide over the explosion it makes when it hits the ground. The heat raises you into the air to bop the Nerd. Three bops kills him.
MISSING LYNX
PART #1: Follow the arrows and keep an eye on the right wall. You'll eventually spot an alcove high on the wall. Inside the alcove is the rocket part.
PART #2: From the start of the level., follow the wall to your right until you reach an area with a switch that activates a turbine. Use the switch and go to the exit. Near it is a metallic wall. Shoot it with an atom and follow the secret path to the turbine. The rocket part is on the other side.
DOME SWEET DOME
PART #1: From the first continue marker, head to your right and follow the conveyor path. Manage to stay on the path long enough and you find the rocket part.
PART #2: Play through the level to the gray and purple floor. Dodge the flashing blue walls to reach an area with several Woolies. Ride up the platforms to the rocket part at the top.
DAS BOBCAT
PART #1: From the start of the level, walk right until you reach a turbine. Go behind it and line up with the rocket part. When you walk through, the turbine pushes you into the rocket part.
PART #2: Use the teleporter near the exit that takes you to two more teleporters. Face the rocket part and go through the teleporter to your right, then push the switches in this order: green, blue, red, yellow. Touch the floor to teleport to the rocket part.
DOMICIDAL MANIAC
PART #1: From the start of the level, wind your way to the right until you reach the trampoline. Go to the area next to the trampoline (with slime on the floor) and flip the switch. Shoot the two gray walls with atoms to reveal the rocket part.
PART #2: From the start of the level, go to the left. Follow the path until you reach four different colored platforms. The Woolie on the high platform indicates the color of the platform you should step on. Step on the pattern of the colors that the Woolie shows you and the rocket part is revealed.
CRIMSON HIDE
PART #1: From the start of the level, go right until you reach a turbine with switches in front of it. Get the ten-shot and shoot the switches in this order: yellow, green, blue, red. The turbine stops so you can grab the rocket part behind it.
PART #2: Look near the turbines for a pink path, then jump to the top of the blue platforms to find the rocket part.
DOME HOME
PARTS #1 and #2: Near the start of the level, shoot the gray wall with an atom and climb the platforms behind it until you reach three teleporter platforms. Take the third teleporter and jump along the platforms to reach a switch. Flip the switch and enter the teleporter. Step on the blue platform to lower the floor, then jump down to two groups of switches. Flip the first group in this order: red, yellow, green, blue. Flip the second group in this order: blue, red, yellow, green. This opens up both rocket parts for collection.
MAMMOTH
Let the mammoth charge you, then

PROFESSIONAL ANALYSIS OF:

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"Disruptor is what your PlayStation was meant to play!"

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INNOMINATE

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GAME SHARK Codez

Welcome to the Game Shark section. Each month we'll list the newest and coolest codez right here for your cheat'n pleasure. Be warned: These codes won't work if you don't own a Game Shark, so don't be calling us and complaining that they don't work when you try to enter them in your game's password screen!

THE ADVENTURES OF LOMAX
Infinite lives 8006B854 0003
Always have helmet ..... 8006B714 FFFF

ALONE IN THE DARK
Infinita pistol ammo 801EA3AE 03E7
Infinite tommy-gun ammo 801EA39C 03E7

DESTRUCTION DERBY 2
Always place first 8009568E 0001
No damage 8008A344 0000
8008A34C 0000
8008A368 0000
8008A354 0000
8008A360 0000
8008A358 0000
Unlock all racing tracks 80079758 0007
Unlock all bowl tracks 8007975C 0004

DISRUPTOR
Invincibility 80077660 007D
Unlimited Psionic 80077668 0064

JET MOTO
Enable all tracks 80176664 0003
Infinita turbos 80176700 0004
80188B48 0004
Race only one lap 80188988 0003
8017CB5C 0002

KING'S FIELD II
Infinite hit points 801B24FC 00FA
Infinite magic pointa 801B2500 3200
Rapid wespon usage 801B2502 13884
Rapid magic uaage 801B2506 1388
Loade of gold 801B2534 C350

PANDEMONIUM!
Access to all levels 8007202C 00142
Invincibility 8009311A 0003
Infinite livae 80093118 0350

SOVIET STRIKE
Infinita fual 80083786 6400
Infinita armor 80083680 05DC

STAR GLADIATOR
Player 1 infinita bealth 801D7CA0 00C8
801D7CA2 00C8
Enable eacrat characters 801EA8E4 0101
801EA8E6 0001

STEEL HARBINGER
Invincibility 8009A07C 03E82

WIPEOUT XL
Enable Taam Piranha 801FE4AC 0100
Enable Phantom Clase 801FE4D2 0100
Infinita weapons 30094528 0001
Infinite energy 30094529 0001

dodge his tail and bounce on his stomach. Someone in the crowd throws a banana into the arena; lure the mammoth into charging into the banana and he takes a nasty slip. Three slips and he's dead.

ZZZOTZ NICE

PART #1: From the start of the level, take a right and shoot the Zzzot with an atom. There's the rocket part!

PART #2: From the start of the level, follow the path left until you reach a continue marker. Climb the platforms and stay parallel with the shoreline. You'll eventually reach a black-and-white floor. Jump on the moving platform heading over the water; it carries you to a pink teleporting platform that takes you to the rocket part.

DAZE OF THUNDER

PART #1: Go to the green path aircar next to a Screenge. Ride it to a blue path aircar, and ride the blue car to a red path aircar. Use the save point and ride the second red car to the rocket part.

PART #2: Find the water spider, liberate him, and ride him to an island. Flip the switch and use the teleporter, which takes you to a series of teleporters. Use them all to find the rocket part.

WOOLIEVILLE HORROR

PART #1: Follow the arrows to an orange and black floor area with blue trees. Climb the trees and go through the teleporter, which takes you to a series of teleporters. Use them all to find the rocket part.

PART #2: Return to the orange and black area and follow the purple path. Find a propeller and ride it to a series of higher platforms. Flip the switch in this area, find the water spider, and free it. Ride the spider until you reach a series of colored platforms. Jump on the platrforms in the order shown by the Woolie on the high platform to collect the rocket part.

RUNAWAY WOOLIE

PART #1: At the start of the level, ride the aircar in front of you to a pink mountain. Climb to the top of the mountain and ride the aircar pointing down. Follow the series of rocket cars to a switch. Flip the switch and ride the aircar to a blue and black floor area with the rocket part.

PART #2: Return to the top of the pink mountain and ride the aircar pointing down. Jump from car to car to reach a series of colored platforms. Jump on the platforms in the order shown by the Woolie until the world "10 SHOT" appears. Ride the aircar to a series of platforms just above the water. Hop on the new aircar and ride it to the 10-shot. Jump onto the platforms and shoot the yellow wall to uncover the rocket part.

BRIGHT LIGHT BIG WOOLIES

PART #1: Play through the level to the area with three platforms. Jump onto the blue platform and play through to the water spider. Ride the spider to an area with platform trees. Jump on the platforms rotating in a circle and glide down to the moving fans below you. Fly across the fans to the rocket part.

PART #2: Go to the exit island and flip the switch to free the water spider. Ride him to another spider and jump on the second spider to ride to the rocket part.

ESCAPE FROM WOO L.A.

PART #1: From the start of the level, ride the lower aircar and jump onto the next aircar you reach. This one takes you to a platform; jump to the platform and get down to the moving platform below. Ride the series of the aircars after the moving platform to reach the rocket part.

PART #2: From the start of the level, ride the higher aircar and jump into the next aircar. It takes you to an island with another aircar. Follow the path of aircars and platforms to reach a 10-shot. Use it to shoot the switches in this order: yellow, green, blue, red. The rocket part appears.

THE FINAL STRETCH

PART #1: From the start of the level, take the path to your left and activate the switch at the end. Find the two-headed general and jump on his heads three times to defeat him. Go through the newly opened doors and make your way to the left. Activate the switch and retrace your steps. Near the start is a hill surrounded by water. Destroy the wall with an atom to reach the hill, which has the rocket part on top.

PART #2: At the end of the level are the bosses, Poly and Ester. Beat them by flipping the switch on their island and shooting them with the atoms freed by the switch. It takes three hits to each boss to kill them both. You can collect the rocket part after they're beaten.

Send all code submissions to:
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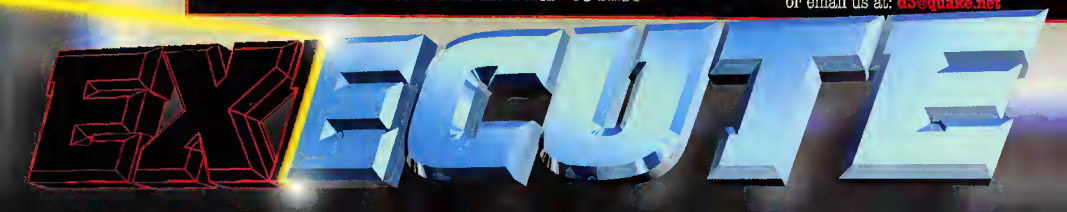

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ENGINE DISPLACEMENT 91.2 LITER
WEIGHT 390 KG

ARMOR
70MM ARMOR
DEFENSE FACTOR 26
WEIGHT 16800 KG

MAIN WEAPON
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WEIGHT 300 KG
HM OSCILLATOR B
SHOTS 200
FIREPOWER 65 (SHOT)
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OKE BODY
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SONY
KIDS TO ADULTS
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PlayStation

NAMCO MUSEUM vol.3

Spotlight on:

ASC GAMES

a Conversation with ASC's President, David Klein

We recently had a conversation with ASC Games' President, David Klein, about his company's positioning in the video game industry and what ASC Games plans to do to keep the fun a-comin' — here's what he had to say ...

PSExtreme: To start off, could you tell us a little about yourself, giving us some background information; such as where you came from and how you started in the industry.

David Klein: I've been in and around the industry since day one, roughly translating to about 20 years. Actually I started in the gaming industry two days after graduating from college and was involved in the launching of Pong; I also spent ten years with Electronic Arts. For me, this whole thing began with an obsession with technology, electronics fascinated me. As a youngster, I was always taking things apart and figuring out what made them tick. Originally, I was hired for my sales and marketing abilities, and it wasn't until '84 -'85 that I was involved with game development. I've always made it my business to understand everybody's games, not only the ones we manufactured at EA and, for that, my opinion was well respected. Subsequently, in my contracts, I was allowed to produce a minimum of one to two games a year, and that's how I eventually got into game development; Best of the Best was one of my earlier titles. I left EA because I was traveling to the West Coast so much that they asked me to relocate. It was my family's wish to stay on the East Coast and my family comes first.

PSEx: What games are you currently playing?

DK: I play constantly with my two boys. We play everything, but at this moment we've been playing Crusin' USA, Shadows of the Empire, Twisted Metal 2, Motor Toon, lots of sports games, particularly baseball, and I've also been playing Tomb Raider and a bit of Command and Conquer. I really don't have a chance to develop any favorites, because I play to relax and to study.

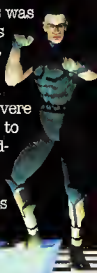
David Klein

PSEx: Obviously, the critical press has had their opportunity to review your PlayStation titles. What do you think of your product? Are you planning on doing any sequels?

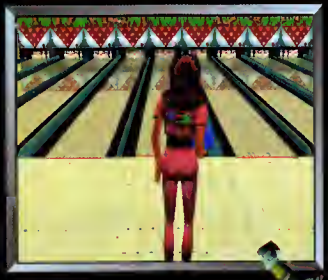
DK: As far as Ten Pin Alley goes, we haven't gotten any feedback on the reviews yet, but sales have been outstanding. I'm really curious to see how the sales are affected after the reviews come in. As for Perfect Weapon, I've never seen a title with such diverse opinions. I personally feel it's a good solid game; in essence, it just needed more time in the tweaking stages. There will be sequels to both Ten Pin Alley and Perfect Weapon, although you won't see the Perfect Weapon sequel in '97. A lot of things should have been in the game that weren't. It will be perfect in '98.

PSEx: We've noticed that, for the most part, ASC's titles have been developed with attention to detail and originality (for example: intricate storylines or unique twists on an existing genre) — a hard thing to come by in this overcrowded industry. Is this a conscious act or prerequisite on your part, vs. saying, "let's just make a football game or a shooter or a 3D fighter or driving game."

DK: Our motto is innovation and entertainment vs. innovation and endless redundancy. Give me a major company that doesn't have a sports game. Every one of our games is unique and different. Technology is not the crux, it's just a means to get us where we want to go. If one game of the three games we produced this Christmas was a bulldog, it's Ten Pin Alley. Here's a little-known story: When we first presented the design for Ten Pin Alley to Sony, to say the reception for it was luke-warm, would be a severe understatement. However, I have to give the people at Sony a lot of credit. They allowed the initial game to be tested at their offices and, when the results were in, the count was



EXCLUSIVE



a unanimous 11 to 0 in favor of the game.

PSEx: What is ASC's charter for 1997? What are the company's goals and objectives? What platforms will you be developing for in the upcoming year and for what types of games do you want ASC to be known?

DK: Our idea is entertainment, not sensationalism. We will continue to produce the most original and innovative products around. We have neat titles lined up for '97 and have already begun thinking about '98. Our mission hasn't changed. We don't want to produce titles that pore on the gore with blood gushing everywhere, but on the other hand, we don't want to be Disney either. Our goal is to produce games that are addictive, funny and/or keep you on the edge of your seat.

PSEx: Could you give our readers a sneak peak into some of the titles we can expect from ASC Games in the next year?

DK: Colliders is the next title that will be released for the PlayStation. It's a futuristic sports game where different alien races from different worlds compete to keep peace by playing the game Colliders. The sport is a combination of football, hockey, pinball and rugby. There's going to be plenty of humor and strategy involved. Incredible Idiots in Space is also on line for the end of '97. It's "Car 54 Where are You?" meets Inspector Closeau. It's Sierra-ish in that it has a very cartoony look to it.

PSEx: We look forward to seeing both titles next year. In closing, we would like to thank you for your time and for sharing your insights and experiences with our readers.

DK: It was a pleasure.

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TEEN
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AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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He's got unblockable moves. He's got a huge arsenal of 10-string combos and air juggles. What's that mean? That means Mr. Yoshimitsu can wear any damn hat he wants. With a new-found ability to disappear and reappear, the stealthy Samurai can carve you a new orifice in seconds flat.

No wonder he's one of the most feared fighters in Tekken 2! With three new fighting modes, 23 [illegible], this sequel's new 3D animations, and more moves and combos than any game on Earth, Yoshimitsu believes he can defeat all 23 challengers before him. Do you have the guts to throw your hat in the ring?

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RALLY CROSS

SONY • AVAILABLE MARCH

Sony Interactive Studios is currently putting the finishing touches on Rally Cross, their off-road racing game. The game features six different venues: the Last Mines, Oasis, Jungle, Royal Gardens, Alpine and Stadium, with three different courses at each venue. And, each of the 18 courses can be raced forwards or backwards. The game also gives the player 16 different vehicles to choose from, each with different speed, acceleration, traction, top speed and handling characteristics. In addition, Rally Cross offers six different modes of play, each of which can support 1-4 players (four-player split-screen should be VERY cool), different elements, like sand, mud, streams, snow, ice, etc., four different camera perspectives, and high-resolution graphics. The game also exhibits a fine attention to detail, with functioning brake lights, four-wheel independent suspension, rotating wheels and realistic crashes that affect the look of your car. The demo that the folks at Sony gave us was pretty impressive, and the courses were graphically detailed. Expect to see the game at retail sometime in the 1st quarter.

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PlayStation

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MEGA MAN 8

CAPCOM • AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

The greot 2D bottle comes to o climox with Copcom's pending releose of Mego Mon 8. If you've been playing video gomes ot oll over the post 10 yeors, you need no introduction to Copcom's moscot/robotic guy. In his new odventure, MM finds himself in o new, highly detoiled world, featuring cortoon-style onimotion with o wider side-scroll perspective. The gome olso feotures Joponese-style Anime cut sequences ond o host of enemies ond weopon power-ups. The gome olso introduces Mego Mon's sidekick, Rush. Once you find oll of the robotic conine's missing pieces, you con turn the metal mutt into o number of useful objects, including: Rush Bike, ollowing MM to speed through dongerous oreos, Rush Borrier, o force field thot protects our hero from domoge, ond Rush Weopon Rechorge ond Life Recovery, both doing exoctly whot the nomes would imply — giving you full power in both oreos. Our initiol impressions of the gome ore thot it is grophically ottroctive and will oppeol to MM fons, but the gomeploy is o little restrictive by toody's stondords.

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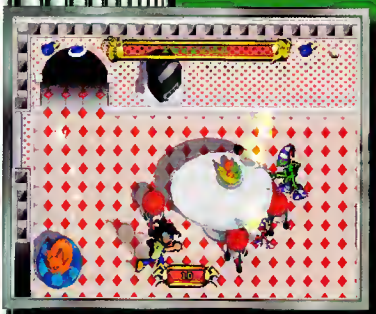
SWAGMAN

EIDOS • AVAILABLE MARCH

Swagman is the new actian/adventure game caming aut af Core Design and Eidas Interactive. This cartoanish adventure puts yau in cammand af twa rather undisciplined twins, Zak and Hannah wha are living a nightmare. With the ability ta change back and forth between the twa potential heroes, yaur goal is ta rescue the Dream Fly, wha is the keeper of all happy dreams, from the sinister Swagman. The game is centered araund two main areas: The real warld af Paradise Falls, and the nightmare dream-lands which can be accessed thraugh mirrar warps. Each area will have a variety of puzzles ta camplete, abstacles ta avercame and enemies ta destray. Making the jaurney mare difficult, the Swagman has stolen a variety af the twins passessions and has hidden them in the real warld. If yau can lacate them, yau can use them to help yau salve the different puzzles. This adventure is dane in true 3D throughaut 17 different lacatians, viewed through a forced averhead perspective. We are anticipating a reviewable capy for our March issue.

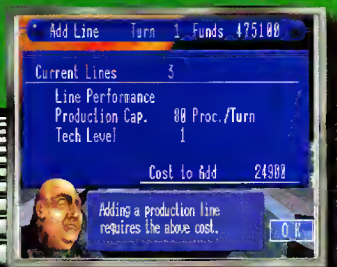


EXPECTING

CARNAGE HEART

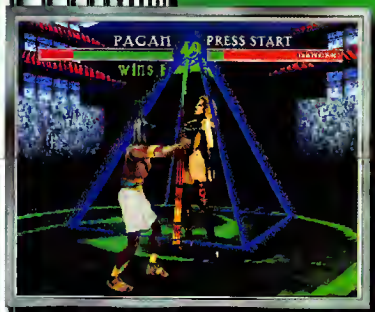
SONY • AVAILABLE JANUARY

Coming saan ta a PlayStatian near yau, compliments of Japan-based Art Dink (for thase of yau wha don't knaw, A.D. is an averseas heavyweight-cantender in the strategy game categary) is a sleeper knawn as Carnage Heart. If yau are into strategy games, immediately call up yaur lacal saftware store and reserve a capy NOW! This game is all aut perfectian when it comes to making yau use yaur brain. Carnage Heart is unique fram ather games in that, instead af cantrolling an an screen character or vehicle, yau design the artificial intelligence, then sit back and watch your creatian wreak havoc (ar get it's metal buttocks whipped) against a bevy af walking, roaming, and flying adversaries. Yau actually get right dawn ta the care-design aspects and build units and teams fram scratch, then try to protect yaur bases as well as seize apponents. Loak far an all aut review in next manth's issue!



WAR GODS

MIDWAY • AVAILABLE MARCH

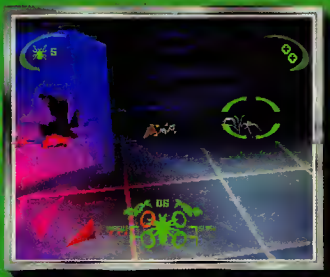


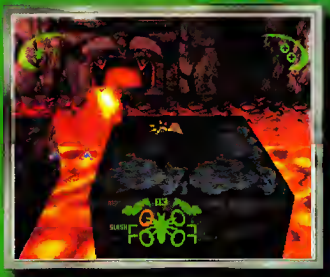
Midway's arcade ane-an-ane fighter, War Gads, is well an its way ta the PlayStatian far early '97. If yau're nat that familiar with the game, it's their first-ever faray inta the realm af 3D fighting, with an assarted cast af palygan fighters that have a penchant far blaad and guts (wha wauld have thaught?). Fram the very early preview, we've been graced with, it's laaking and playing really gaad. The characters all have a huge array af maves that can be pulled aff similar in style and executian to their other fighting franchise, the Martal Kambat series, with satisfyingly similar results. In additian, each character has his ar her awn finishing maves ar "fatalities", if yau will, such as Ahau Kin's gaaey "Tear yaur heart aut and eat it" fatality (see accampanying screen-shat, tap right far all the gary details). Nat much mare can be said at this paint, (hey, it's anly a preview!) ather than Midway can expect same stiff campetitian from bath Capcam with Marvel Super Heraes and Street Fighter EX, and Namca's sharp-looking Saul Blade.

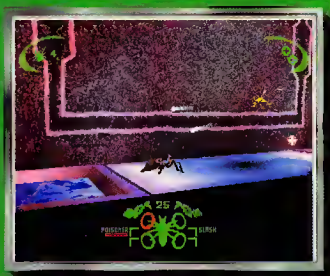
EXPECTING

SPIDER

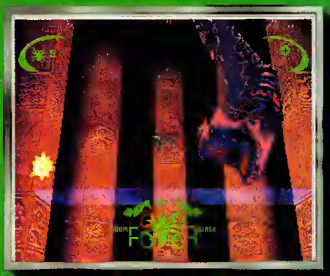
BMG INTERACTIVE • AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

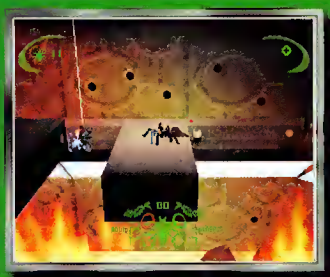


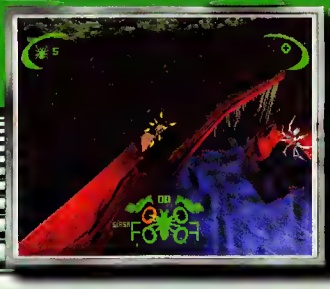




BMG Interactive's Spider is coming to the PlayStation in the not-so-distant future. BMG, you say? That's right, the giant distributor is getting into the video game business, developing games for PlayStation, PC and Nintendo 64, and this title, developed by Bass Studios, is their first leap into the fray. Spider is a snazzy looking action/platformer that is similar in concept to Crystal Dynamics' 3D platformer, Pandemonium. You take control over a spider (you are a computer geeb who is enslaved in the body of the eight-legged predator) and work through six levels of action, attempting to find the joeys who swiped your human body. (We have it on good authority that it was one Peter Parker.) The player has access to 15 different power-ups, for his basic spider/pea shooter, including flame throwers, boomerangs and homing missiles. From the time that we've had with the product, its major strength lies in the graphic quality of the game's six worlds and its enemies. The game will be available in February and we should feature it in EXRATED next month.



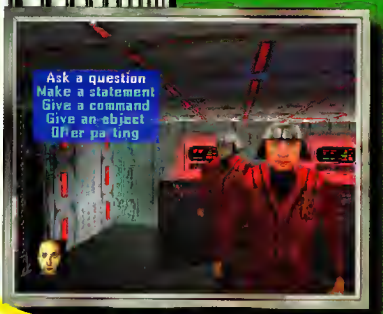


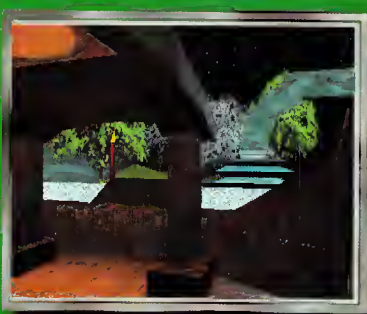


SENTIENT

PSYGNOSIS • AVAILABLE MARCH

Psygnasis, a name gamers usually equate with twa things: racing games and unbelievable 3D. If anything, it laaks like '97 is gaing to be samewhat af a departure far them, with games spanning new and different categaries. Take Sentient, far example. Althaugh played in real-time 3D, this title is an epic Adventure/RPG, set in the realm af science fictian. The story places yau in the role of a medical technician sent farm Earth to an arbiting space statian to investigate an autbreak af radiatian sickness. From there, yau'll discaver things are nat exactly as they seem, as yau actually set yaur awn path, which can result in several different autcomes. And, what makes Sentient sa unique, is haw deep it gaes. There are 60 different characters that you can interact with — each having their awn jabs and respansibilities, emations, agendas and graup alliances, and aver 200 locatians ta explare — this game looks huge! Sentient will surely go dawn as the "thinking man's title" of '97 and claims to span four different gaming genres: Adventure, RPG, Strategy and Simulation.

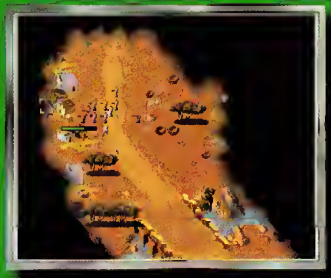




EXPECTING

COMMAND & CONQUER

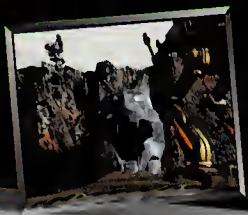
WESTWOOD STUDIOS • AVAILABLE JANUARY

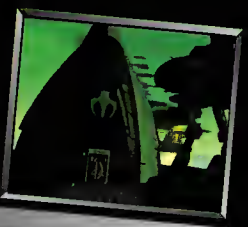


Cammand and Canquer is without a doubt ane af aur favarite games far the PC. We have been waiting for quite same time to hear about a PlayStatian canversian. Well, the wait is finally aver. Westwaad Studias, the creatar of the PC game, is bringing C&C ta a PlayStation cansale near yau. C&C is a tap down military/strategy game that pits the forces af Good and Evil in an epic struggle far contral af the Tiberium trade. Tiberium is the single saurce af weolth and influence ta the people af this "New Warld Order." Yau have the ability ta play as either the "gaad" falks af the GDI ar "Glabal Defense Initiative", or as the inherently evil "Bratherhaad af Nod". The goal here is to set up mabile canstructian sites to build the equipment and troops yau will need to harvest yaur crop while beating back the opposing forces. The PC game was an absalute blast to ploy. Let's hope that this is ane of those rare conversians that wark. Command and Canquer shauld hit retail this Janvary.

MECHWARRIOR 2

31ST CENTURY COMBAT





Activision was the world's first third-party video game company, farmed by a group of disgruntled Atari programmers in the Stone Age of gaming, when men were men, cartridges were 4K, and joysticks had one fire button. During the Atari 2600's glory days in the early 1980s, they were the Mr. Big Shot of the industry, releasing a string of remarkable games (Kaboom!, Pitfall, StarMaster) which used black magic to make the 2600 do things that were supposedly far beyond its capabilities. But after the industry crash of 1983, and throughout the Eighties, Activision went through difficult times — at one point, even going so far as to make an ill-advised name change to Mediagenic, which sounds to my strange brain like some sort of nutritional supplement. ("Mediagenic — when your eating habits suck.")

Now, Activision is converting their beloved smash, MechWarrior 2, to the PlayStation, hoping that it makes the same impact that it did on the PC, and further establish them as a player in the video game market.

MechWarrior 2 lets you choose between two modes: a career path under one of two Clans (Jade Falcon or Wolf) and an Instant Action game that lets you jump right into the cockpit of a Mech' and start blasting things. The career path is the deeper of the two, taking you through a full-fledged war one mission at a time. Before you start fighting for real, though, you have to play through a series of training missions. These set the Mech' mood extremely well — particularly the digitized voices of your gruff instructors — and get you familiar with the controls. Now, on the keyboard-equipped PC, the controls were surprisingly simple, but on the PlayStation and its ten-button controller, they're inevitably a bit complicated. There are four control configurations, so everyone will find something they like, but expect to thoroughly play every one of the

EXTREME

training missions before you're competently controlling your big-ass 'bat.

When the learning is over, the bottles begin, and this is where MechWarrior 2 truly shines. Each of the 32 missions, which are completely redesigned from the PC version, throws you onto a planet with a unique terrain and environment (barren desert, windswept ice and snow, lush jungle) against a variety of enemy 'Mechs. The missions start out simple and quickly get tough as the enemy 'Mechs grow more intelligent and powerful. As you successfully complete missions and your rank increases, you're allowed to take the helm of bigger and badder 'Mechs (the game has 12 designs) and customize them with over 20 types of weapons, including missiles, lasers, guns, and extremely painful noogies.

The biggest change between the PlayStation and PC versions of MechWarrior 2 is in the pretty-pixel department. The PlayStation version runs at less than half the resolution of the PC version, which could go up to a mind-blowing 1024 X 768, but makes up for its chubby pixels with an increased frame rate (usually around 20 per second), better lighting effects, and more detailed texture maps.

Gameplay changes? Yes, indeed. The most noticeable one is that the pace has been sped up; the mission areas are smaller (no doubt to squeeze into the PlayStation's 3.5 megabytes of RAM), and everything happens noticeably faster. There wasn't a lot of downtime in the PC version, but there's no relaxation whatsoever in the PlayStation version; you're almost constantly shooting and maneuvering. The PC version played more like a simulator than an action game, with battle tactics playing a major part, but the PlayStation version emphasizes shooting over strategy. A wise choice? Probably.

The most radical gameplay change is the addition of power-ups, because we all know that video games are required by law to have them. The various goodies give you invisibility, invulnerability, more jump jets for higher jumping, more heat sinks for increased firing (since giant robots tend to overheat when constantly shooting), and repairs for damaged systems.

The coolest gameplay addition is support for the often neglected Link Cable; MechWarrior 2 lets you hook up two PlayStations and fight a two-player cooperative or competitive battle in the Instant Action mode. Let's just hope the rumors that Sony plans to dump the Link Cable port in future revisions of the PlayStation are false.

Zoch

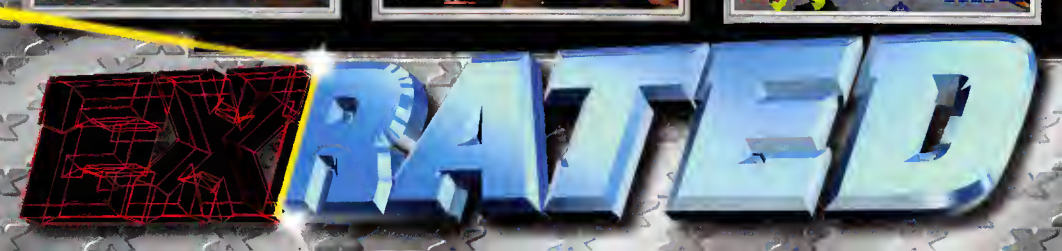
AREA 51

PUBLISHED BY MIDWAY — DEVELOPED BY MESA LOGIC

What can you say about Area 51 that hasn't already been said. It's one of the most anticipated games for the Playstation this holiday season. I know that I have pumped more than my fair share of quarters into the arcade version (when I didn't have to wait too long in line that is). It's also one of the first major titles to support the game gun (Die Hard Trilogy being the other). As I write this review, the final version is being shipped to retail and should be readily available to all of you Area 51 Commandos. Before I get too deep into the review, however, a little background information is probably in order, for those of you who don't have a nine year old that you can use as an excuse to go to the arcades.

The story goes something like this: an alien space probe has landed in a remote desert somewhere in Nevada (sounds like a good place for it, no one would ever suspect a thing). The Fed's have taken the ship back to a secret government compound to do some research. The secret compound is known as "Area 51" Shortly after arrival, all communication is lost with the base, and it is assumed that an alien force has taken control of the compound. You, as a member of an elite para military group known as the STAAR team, (specializing in countering all alien threats) have been sent in to activate the nuclear self destruct system (hey, it's only Nevada). You do this by blasting your way through thousands of aliens, while trying to hit the various power- ups that give you access to more powerful weapons and a smattering of grenades. You now have the making of an absolute arcade smash. But, hey, how does it translate onto the PlayStation? I knew you were going to ask that.

Let's face it, you can't help but make comparisons to the "other" arcade shooter, Virtua Cop. Since the Sega game isn't available for the PlayStation, however, I will limit my comparison comments to the areas (no pun intended) that they share in common. The first thing



you look for, when it comes to an arcade translation, is how true the programmers have come to an exact duplication. In the case of Area 51, it's oh, so close! (Or to put it in the immortal words of Agent 86, "missed it by that much!") The PlayStation version just doesn't move as fast as the arcade, and the animation isn't as smooth either. The different levels and the gameplay, however, are dead on accurate. The PlayStation version is every bit as challenging as the arcade and just as habit forming. Speaking of gameplay, what's life like with the new "Justifier" game gun from Konami, you ask? I'll get to that later in the review; but for now, lets stick to the task at hand. The biggest knock, however, comes with the overall size of the game. There just aren't enough levels, nor is there any significant variety in them. This is fairly common in arcade games, and an affliction that Virtua Cop suffers from, as well. There's not really much you can do about it; if a game's origins are in the arcade, the size is automatically going to be somewhat limited, especially if you get an exact translation.

So, was Area 51 worth the wait? In a word, yes! You can't help but be sucked in by the lure of non-stop alien destruction. If you liked the arcade version, you'll be very happy with the PlayStation version. The addition of a first-rate arcade gun game is just what the PlayStation needed to keep it ahead of the pack. Oh, and one last note: If you're wondering how the Justifier performed, it's definitely the most accurate gun available for the PlayStation, at this time, but the trigger mechanism is a little soft for my tastes.

Alex

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

85%

COMPATIBILITY

1or2 Players

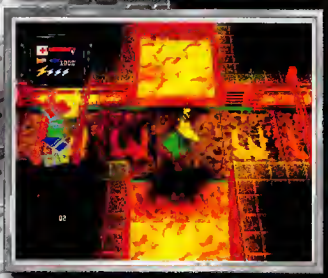
Mouse Compatible

So, is Area 51 worth the wait? In a word, yes! You can't help but be sucked in by the lure of non-stop alien destruction. If you liked the arcade version, you'll be very happy with the PlayStation version. The addition of a first-rate arcade gun game is just what the PlayStation needed to keep it ahead of the pack. Oh, and one last note: If you're wondering how the Justifier performed, it's definitely the most accurate gun available for the Playstation, at this time, but the trigger mechanism is a little soft for my tastes.

SILVER X

RE•LOADED

PUBLISHED BY INTERPLAY — DEVELDPED BY GREMLIN

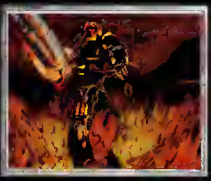


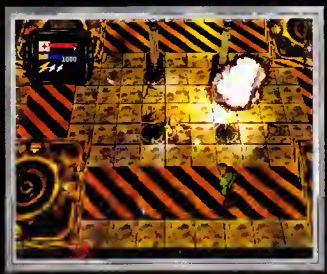
Loaded was easily the best shooter available for the PlayStation during the '95 holiday season: visually stunning, harder than hell, and bloodier than a Quentin Tarantino flick. Just over a year later, Interplay has graced us with Reloaded, which sticks surprisingly — and disappointingly — close to the Loaded formula.

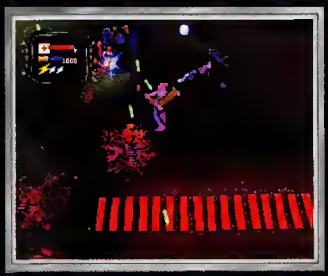
First, the similarities: Both games use a 3/4 overhead view of the action that you can zoom in and out, although you'll naturally play zoomed out for a better view of your surroundings. Both games let you choose from six characters, each with vastly different characteristics (speed, stamina, firepower) and weapons. Both games have an automap in the upper-left corner that shows what's around you. Both games have easy-to-learn, smooth-as-silk controls: your character shoots, runs, strafes, and unleashes screen-clearing "ultra bombs" at your whim. And both games have a bad guy who's always one step ahead of the player; in Loaded, it was FUB ("Fat Ugly Boy," according to the manual, but substitute swear words as needed for a more accurate translation), and in Reloaded, it's CHEB ("Charming, Handsome, Erudite Bastard"). "Erudite," by the way, means "educated and scholarly" — and since I needed to look it up, I guess I ain't erudite. Now, for the big

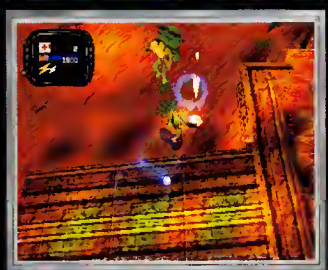
heap of differences between the games ...

Diff #1: Reloaded has 12 levels, while Loaded had 15. Reloaded's levels are slightly larger and more complex, though, to the point where there's a short briefing before each one. There's also a bit more interaction with the game environment; some levels even let you push around objects. Diff #2: Only four of Loaded's six characters were carried over to Reloaded. Making the cut are Bounca (a nightclub doorman), Butch (a cross-dresser from Hell), Cap'n Hands (a cyborg pirate), and Mamma (a massive manchild); getting the boot are Fwank (a psycho clown) and Vox (a chick with deadly vocal chords); new to the cast are The Consumer (a marrow-sucking cannibal) and Sister Magpie (a nun in the Church of Complete Nutbars). Diff #3: Loaded's dark, moody graphics









candy and a quick glimpse at each character's lifestyle. The Consumer's intro, which not-so-tastefully shows blood, corpses, and body parts scattered throughout her dwelling, is the most gut-churning imagery I've ever seen in a PlayStation game. (I used to faithfully read the splatter-movie magazine Fangoria from cover to cover when I was younger, and now seeing gore in a video game almost makes me want to spew chunks. When did I become so lame?!)

Reloaded is fun, but it's a sequel that suffers from a strong case of Been-There-Done-That Syndrome. The sick thrill of watching your enemies blow up into little piles of quivering flesh wears off by the fourth level, just like it did in Loaded, and you then find yourself doing a lot of repetitive shooting — your weapon gets more powerful, but never changes — with precious little strategy involved. If you loved Loaded, or you enjoy your games slathered with a thick layer of carnage, Reloaded will fit you like O.J.'s bloody gloves; if you prefer a combination of brainpower and gratuitous violence, check out Konami's Project Overkill, which has 16-bitty graphics, but deeper, more varied gameplay.

were 3D, but the level layouts were flat and two-dimensional; Reloaded's dark, moody graphics take full advantage of the third dimension, with several levels having multiple "layers" to explore. Diff #4: Several of Loaded's levels had endlessly regenerating enemies, making the game about as fair as Shaquille O'Neal and Dr. Ruth playing one-on-one; Reloaded keeps the regeneration to a minimum, relying on careful enemy placement for challenge instead of infinite waves of bad guys. (This has the effect of making Reloaded just slightly that much easier than Loaded, although you'll still get your buttocks kicked so hard it'll leave a CD-shaped bruise.) Diff #5: The automap fills in areas of the level you've explored with white to indicate where you've been and where you haven't — a nice addition, but the map's still too small for my liking. Diff #6: Loaded has five difficulty levels, whereas Reloaded has only three. I know not why. Diff #7: Loaded featured several awesome techno tunes (with vocals, which are still a huge rarity in game music) from the group Pop Will Eat Itself, but all the average (non-vocal) techno tunes in Reloaded were composed by Neil "Who?" Biggin. Diff #8: There are full-motion-video intro and outro sequences for each character, giving you tasty eye

Zach

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME 83%

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players

Reloaded is fun, but it's a sequel that suffers from a strong case of Been-There-Done-That Syndrome. The sick thrill of watching your enemies blow up into little piles of quivering flesh wears off by the fourth level, just like it did in Loaded, and you then find yourself doing a lot of repetitive shooting — your weapon gets more powerful, but never changes — with precious little strategy involved. If you loved Loaded, or you enjoy your games slathered with a thick layer of carnage, Reloaded will fit you like O.J.'s bloody gloves; if you prefer a combination of brainpower and gratuitous violence, check out Konami's Project Overkill, which has 16-bitty graphics, but deeper, more varied gameplay.

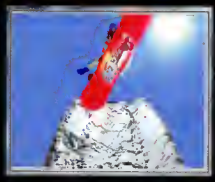
SILVER X

COOL BOARDERS

PUBLISHED BY SDNY — DEVELDPED BY UEP SYSTEMS

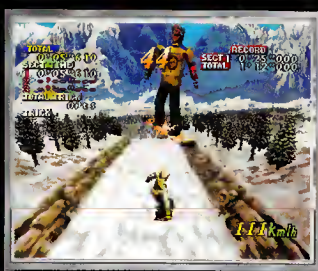
If you're a regular reader of PSExtreme, which would be hard to believe if you weren't, you've read about a title from UEP (pronounced "wep") Systems of Japan called Cool Boarders. Picked up by Sony last Fall, this snow boarding racing game has been tweaked and polished over the last couple of months and is now ready for a US release.

As we reported in our September issue, Cool Boarders takes a page from Namco's Alpine Racer, using a snow board instead of skis and a Sony Controller instead of a massive virtua-skiing platform. The game is pretty much your basic racer; however, you only race against yourself, ala a pretty nifty ghost mode. Sony has made a few improvements over the Japanese version in the form of two additional bonus tracks if you finish the first three tracks with the most points. The game centers around your ability to slice down the different mountain terrain at breakneck speeds and accumulate points by doing special airborne tricks. In reality, however, the tricks are somewhat secondary to your ability to melt the snow with your speed. You've also got your standard surf rock tunes, to help you down the slopes, and a "Spicoliesque" announcer to help guide your way: "Whoa man, I thought you were hiiiistory! Whoa, gnarly ... you cut just like a knife!" Get the picture?



When we originally previewed this title, back in September, the one aspect of the game that stood out was the speed, but there was also quite a bit of polygon break up that went along with it. In the final US version, however, the speed is still there, but the polygon mishaps, for the most part, seem to be a thing of the past. The animation is silky smooth and the chunkiness of the Japanese version is "history dude". When it is all said and done, however, Cool Boarders is a racing game, pure and simple, and it is within that context that it should be judged.

One of my biggest complaints with your basic racing game is the fact that



EXRATED

the skill progression required to get to the more advanced levels is usually pretty steep. You'll have no problem beating the first level, but the levels after that are an entirely different story. Such is the case with Cool Boarders. The first level is pretty mild and allows you to hone your skills for the upcoming challenges. The problem is, that the next two levels are an absolute nightmare. This becomes very frustrating after a while, and just makes you want to put the controller down. Imagine an auto racing game where you couldn't keep the car on the track. How long would you continue playing before you decided that watching an episode of the Simpsons was a a better use of your time? Don't get me wrong, it's not that it's impossible to master the more difficult courses, it's just that the learning curve is so steep, you stand a good chance of giving up before you finally master them. Although the learning curve is pretty steep, it can be overcome; the most frustrating part about Cool Boarders, however, is something that can't. Like any other racing game, when you run into the sidewalls, the computer will bounce you off and back onto the track. The only difference in CB is that the tracks are so narrow that you continue to bounce from one end to the other. I swear you'd think you were playing pinball.

So, where does that leave us? The bottom line is that Cool Boarders is a very challenging and unique racing game. Although I have a couple of issues with the control factor, it's still a blast to play. If you're tired of burning up pavement with your racing games, this just might be the ticket for you.

Alex

PS EXTREME — THE BOTTOM LINE

85%

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

Although the learning curve is pretty steep, it can be overcame; the most frustrating part about Cool Boarders, however, is something that can't. Like any other racing game, when you run into the sidewalls, the computer will bounce you off and back onto the track. The only difference in CB is that the tracks are so narrow that you continue to bounce from one end to the other. I swear you'd think you were playing pinball. The bottom line is that Cool Boarders is a very challenging and unique racing game. Although I have a couple of issues with the control factor, it's still a blast to play. If you're tired of burning up pavement with your racing games, this just might be the ticket for you.

SILVER X

POWERSLAVE

PUBLISHED BY PLAYMATES — DEVELOPED BY LOBOTOMY SOFTWARE

Some people might argue that Powerslave is just another Doom-clone. These same people may feel that we don't need another one of these types of games, with so many currently available for the PlayStation and more on the way. I agree, to some extent, that there is a glut of these types of games out there, from the original Doom and more recent Final Doom, to the just-released Disruptor and Dark Forces, and the upcoming Hexen and Duke Nuke 'em 3D. And, I feel that, if this type of game is going to be produced, it needs to either have great license appeal — such as Alien Trilogy or Dark Forces — or offer something over and above the usual, "run down the corridor, blast the demons and then find the exit" mind-set. Thankfully, this isn't the case with Playmates Interactive's Powerslave. Oh sure Powerslave has all of the usual trappings, but Playmates, along with the developers, Lobotomy Software, have added a lot of outstanding features and new gameplay elements that loft it above the current offerings.

To start, Powerslave's atmosphere is a decidedly Egyptian motif, which lends perfectly to this style of game. The game takes place in an ancient Egyptian city which has been overrun by dark, mysterious powers. Many armed forces have been brought in from all over the world, and have entered the city, attempting to rid it of this evil, but none have returned. You are the last resort, and as usual, you're going to need plenty of firepower to do away with these heinous baddies. The enemies you'll encounter, range from foot-chomping spiders and swooping falcons to magic-wielding mummies and huge, fire-spewing lava creatures. The levels themselves go from from outside huge pyramid-like structures and lush palaces to deep inside Pharaoh's tombs and lava-filled volcanoes.

Like some of the newer first-person shooters, Powerslave gives the player more freedom of movement, in the form of being able to jump, swim and look up or down. But, what's unlike any of the other shooters, is the abili-

EX RATED

ty to go back into previously played-through levels to uncover new paths and areas that weren't accessible before. This is done with the inclusion of some nifty artifacts (power-ups) that you must find first, such as the Sandals of Ikumptet that allow you to jump extra high, or the Sobek Mask that enables you to stay underwater for extended periods of time, or the Shawl of Isis that you can use to float in the air for especially long jumps.

Besides its unique gameplay, Powerslave's graphical engine has to be its biggest highlight. Except for Universal's Disruptor, nothing comes close to the super-smooth polygons and unbelievable frame rate that this game achieves. I don't think the game ever drops under 30 fps, with most of the time staying well above that. The result is motion that makes you a little queasy — and that's a good thing! The game is packed with plenty of special effects, such as beautiful multi-colored light sourcing and great use of shading effects. The only disappointment I found, in terms of the graphics, are that the characters and items are extremely one-dimensional when compared to the rest of the game's graphics.

It wouldn't be proper not to mention the fact that the self-proclaimed king of all game music, Tommy Talarico, did the tunes for Powerslave. Although they are quite good and fit the Egyptian atmosphere, I have to admit I've heard better.

I really had a great time playing Powerslave. Out of the many first-person shooters that are now available for the PlayStation, this one stands above the rest. I can easily recommend it to anyone who finds enjoyment in these types of games as it is definitely one of the best, if not THE best currently out there.

Greg

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME 93%

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

Oh, sure Powerslave has all of the usual trappings, but Playmates, along with the developers, Lobotomy Software, have added a lot of outstanding features and new gameplay elements that loft it above the current offerings. I really had a great time playing the game, and out of the many first-person shooters that are now available for the PlayStation, this one stands above the rest. I can easily recommend it to anyone who finds enjoyment in these types of games, as it is definitely one of the best, if not THE best currently out there.

GOLD X

NFL GAMEDAY '97

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY SONY

I have spent the better part of the months of November and December playing Sony's NFL GameDay '97 — and comparing it to both the original GameDay and every other football product on the market. I'm done, there is no comparison.

While the game does provide a 'Rookie' mode for newbies to get their feet wet, GameDay '97 makes a statement for the future of sports video games by creating the most realistic simulation of playing an NFL game, with a level of player control and strategy that has no peer in console gaming — this is where the product's strengths lie. If you are just glancing at the screen shots and thinking "Gee, that kind of looks like last year's game," you're on the outside, looking in. Let's step into the product and see what makes GameDay '97 the next best thing to being there.

GameDay '97 takes the graphic environment of the original and brings it up to speed — with detailed, fast and fluid 30 frame per second animation that never slows down, gets sloppy or has that nasty effect of sending your player skidding across the field like Nancy Kerrigan after Tonya has given her a little 'love' tap. All of the stadiums are here, with logo's, and 'horner' signage — helping to give GameDay '97 a greater sense of being there. In addition, the game gives you complete control over the play camera — allowing you to get as close to, or as far away from, the action as you desire. But, the graphic improvements, while welcome, are not what makes the game great — the answer to that question rests in your hands. I will give you my recommendation for how to play GameDay '97 at the end of the article, but let's get to the features that create the realism.

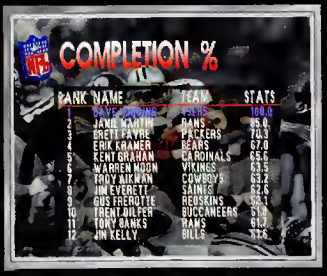
Check this out: on offense, GameDay '97 gives you THREE different ways of controlling the quarterback. The first is the standard method of hitting the 'x' button to call the receiver icons up then hitting the appropriate button (tap for a lob — hold for a bullet pass) to deliver the ball. The second is a system

called "Total Control Passing" where you hold down the L2 button at the line of scrimmage to activate it; then, when throwing the ball, you can use the control pad to help direct the pass. The third is a more difficult (definitely for advanced players) passing meter that works much like the kicking meter — it brings with it a greater risk-reward factor. Your quarterback also has the ability to take a knee, intentionally throw the ball out of bounds and to spike the ball to kill the clock.

After the ball is in the hands of your back or receiver, you can deal some serious grief! (Via holding down the L2 button.) Ball carriers can, in addition to the now-standard jump, speed burst, hurdle and dive, do one-handed catches (which are not just for show — they can actually INCREASE your chances of catching the ball, if the defender does not have the appropriate response (the dive tackle high — more about that later), dive over the pile (full Marcus Allen on this one), do a double spin (which also comes with twice the time to recharge your energy), a combination hurdle and speed burst (same drill), a shoulder charge and speed burst, a stiff-arm and speed burst and they can pitch the ball. All of these moves are not some fluff animations, either — they are all a button press away and TOTALLY under YOUR control.

The same goes for defense, where there is always a counter for any special move made by the offense. From personal experience I

EX RATED



can tell you that making use of all of these moves creates an almost fighting game-like atmosphere when you are playing a multi-player game (1-8 players can join in). The defensive player, in addition to last year's swim moves, can do spears/diving tackles, jumps and speed bursts, do a combo swim move/speed burst, a forearm shiver/speed burst, dive tackle high and can jump higher for a one-handed interception (the other counter-attack for the receiver going up to make a one-handed grab).

And all of this gameplay is wrapped around a computer AI that actually LEARNS your play-calling tendencies (it gets smarter with an increase in difficulty level — good luck in 'Hall of Fame' mode!). If there are any 'go-to' plays in the higher difficulty levels of GameDay '97, I haven't found them. In addition, the game lets you take control over game speed, clock speed, player physics (where you can select the level of control — from Tight to Loose (see Madden ... oops — I mean ice skating comment above). For one player/season/league guys, statistics are tracked in virtually every offensive and defensive category, you have full roster management with a Create Player option, trading/free agent signing and more. One of the coolest features is that the PA announcer has 600 different first names in his database. So, if your name is 'Dave', just enter it and, when you are involved in a play, he'll announce your name over the loudspeaker!

OK, so here's my perfect playing scenario ... Game Speed: Fast, Clock Speed: Fast, Computer AI: 120, Difficulty Level: All-Pro, ten minute quarters, Total Control Passing, the default camera angle, Control: Tight and the L2 button — that's football!

Is GameDay '97 perfect? No, but it is very close and very Platinum. Problems include small things like inconsistency in advancing fumbles (the play will stop even though the new ball carrier hasn't been touched), a database that saves a bunch of league leaders in a bunch of categories, but not every player on every team, and file management that makes you delete your previous saved game before you save the new one (versus saving on top of the previous week). Also, given advances in PlayStation graphics during 1996, GameDay's look, while superior to every other football game, is not as clean as some of the newer sports games coming to market. I am anxious to see what GameDay's development team can do next year, graphically, when they have a year to do nothing but look at things like high-resolution graphics and polygon player animation. The "Bottom Line"? ... Sony has raised the bar, again.

Dave

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

99%

COMPATIBILITY

1 to 8 Players

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-8 Players

I have spent the better part of the months of November and December playing Sony's NFL GameDay '97 — and comparing it to both the original GameDay and every other football product on the market. I'm done, there is no comparison. Is GameDay '97 perfect? No, but it is very close and very Platinum. I am anxious to see what GameDay's development team can do next year, graphically, when they have a year to do nothing but look at things like high-resolution graphics and polygon player animation. The "Bottom Line"? ... Sony has raised the bar, again.

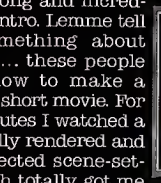
PLATINUM X

PROJECT X2

PUBLISHED BY ACCLAIM — DEVELOPED BY TEAM 47 SOFTWARE

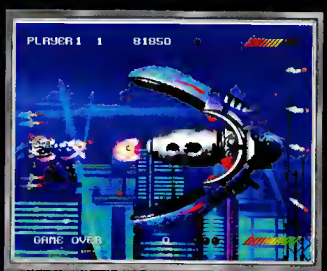
Now, it has been a LONG time since I have played a shooter, especially a decent one. Well, my friends, my shooter-less streak has been broken. Project X2, by Team 47 Software, is on the horizon, and for you, the gamer, that is great news. When my boss (and slave driver) Greg handed me the PX2 CD, I thought nothing more than, "Hmm, just like Greg to slap something HE doesn't wanna review on me ... the peon". Ahh but I was wrong, as PX2 is an excellent shooter worthy of any game-player's time. Check it out ...

Well, as usual, in went the CD. "POWER ON!" (damn, that still doesn't work). I manually turned my trusty PSX on and waited for the intro. All I have to say is "WOW!" ... Unexpectedly, I was treated to a rather long and incredible CG intro. Lemme tell you something about OCEAN ... these people know how to make a kick-ass short movie. For five minutes I watched a beautifully rendered and well directed scene-setter which totally got me ready to play. Then came the options ... easy ... simple ... a shooter's option screen. I could choose between one and two players (one for me please), and two difficulties: Normal and

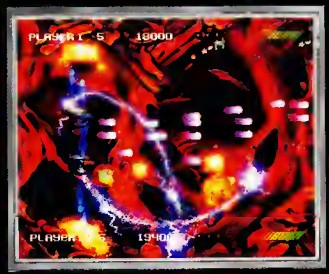


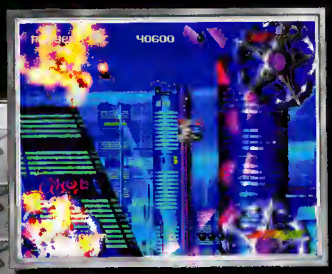
Hard. Of course, I picked Hard ... Before I left the Options menu, I noticed I could also set my sound settings, as expected, but I also had the option to center my screen, a great feature — I might add. OK, options are set, let's get going. Next was ship selection. I had the choice between three ships: one fast with low armor, one slow with good armor, and one with balanced attributes. I chose the low-armor quick ship (bad choice for the first time), and jumped into my game.

Now, when I got into the main part of the game, I wasn't so much "let-down" as "disappointed" with the graphics. I think that was because the intro spoiled me ... but that "disappointment" soon wore off. The next thing I noticed

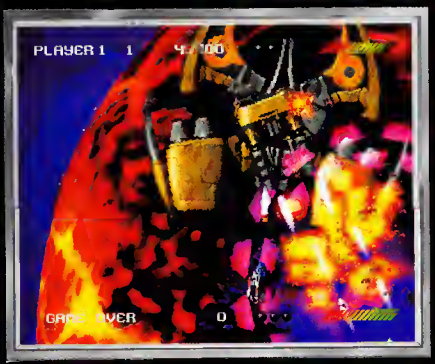


EX RATED





was the energy bar. This isn't your standard "get shot once, lose a life" shooter, much to my excitement. I soon realized why ... enemies came from everywhere ... the side ... the top ... the back ... (I think one even came from my cookie jar). After immediately getting my butt kicked all over the place, all within the first two minutes of gameplay, I promptly reset and started over on *ahem* Normal. Ohh yeah, I also picked the heavily armored ship. I was now prepared. So back in I went ... This time I lasted much longer. YAY! Long enough to get all the way to the third stage, where I was surprised with a cool gameplay twist, the action shifted vertically. Now I was flying my spaceship upwards and taking out many-a-baddie. Accompanying me during my flight, was an automated voice co-pilot which gave me hints: "shoot the rocks" and "destroy squadrons to upgrade weapons." Way cool ... My favorite feature, though, had to be the shrapnel damage. If you wax a baddie and he is near a friend ... his baddie-buddy will be taken out too. This sometimes leads to huge chains of enemy deaths ... Yee Haw!



Graphically, Project X2 is definitely above-average. Excellent parallaxing and finely drawn enemies, as well as great zooming effects without the loss of detail. Only a handful of times did I notice any type of slow-down, which is acceptable, to me at least, with 20-30 sprites on screen at once. As for audio? Superb! The fast techno beats keep you moving while each sound effect is right on target to put that realistic feel in the game.

Wha ih looh lik (jive ... of course): After solid hours and hours of Project X2, I can honestly say this game is a keeper. With excellent control, decent graphics, pumpin' audio, and tons of weapons/weapon combinations, I was hooked. I haven't played a shooter of this quality in a long while, and I was definitely pleased (and surprised) with its awesome gameplay and features. My only gripe is the lack of ships to choose from and the sometimes-plain background graphics. Hey ... if you like shooters ... PX2 is for you! If not ... it's surely worth a rent.

Ben

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

85%

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players

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SILVER X

NAMCO MUSEUM VOL. 3

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY NAMCO

It seems like only yesterday that I finished reviewing Namco's Museum Vol. 2; but, flipping through a few of the back issues, I see that it was more like three months ago! Wow — how time flies when you're having fun. Actually, if you want to take this to a philosophical level, you might say that it seems like only yesterday that I was plunking down quarters to play some of these great titles in their original arcade housings (mem - ries, ya ta da ta da da da, twisted something something some - thing, ta da da da daaaa). Anyway, that's old news, Gomer, 'cause today we're talking Volume 3 - now we've got all new levels, characters, strategies, and weapons. Maybe not, but there are six new classic games to be reckoned with, and it's my job to play every single one of them (at least once).

Well, well, well. Look what we have here ... Dig Dug, Galaxian, Ms. Pac Man, Pole Position II, and a couple of games to be named later. Wow! Talk about some heavy hitters in the classic arcade arena. Heck, those four titles alone garnered enough quarters to pay Neil O'Donnel's salary for a couple of years (by the way, nice free agent pickup, New York). But, as usual, I digress.

Dig Dug, the arcade game worthy enough to be the first full-size arcade machine in the hallowed Dimension Publishing offices, and one of my all-time top ten games, is still a game worthy of once a week game play. The playability of Dig Dug is ageless, and it's purpose is simple, like so many of the great games, — get to the next level. Ah, the next level, not unlike the raison d'être of Galaxian, the wonder-shooter from the same time period. This masterpiece is still as addictive as Diet Coke but it won't turn your teeth brown. Fingers sore, but teeth pearly white. Hard to imagine Ms. Pac-Man taking third in a beauty contest, but in this collection of fantastic titles third best is still quite an honor. I always preferred Ms. to Mr.

star studded lineup of arcade titans.

So, that's a detail of the games involved, along with a bit of their history, but there are also a few new features in the Museum option worthy of mentioning. First of all, there's the inclusion of automatic record keeping. If you get a high score on any of the games, Vol. 3 will save your score before exiting the program, all without having to choose the annoying "save game" feature. Also, while walking inside the museum you can enter a movie theater to view images from each of the games. What's boffo about this is that a lot of the characters from the games (The Pac-Family, Frygar, etc.) are all sitting in the seats! Pretty funny! Also, you're able to look up whilst perusing the museum grounds. This really only comes in handy when viewing the painting, although I'm not quite sure who the character is (it looks like a girl from Y's). Anyway, to the 100,000 or so of you who have already purchased Vol.1 (and rented Vol. 2), it's time to break out the checkbook and get the best Volume yet into your collection!

(or Super, or Baby, et al.) and like the others, this arcade classic is still superb. Boy, just for a quick flashback, try putting in your 2600 version of Ms. Pac-Man - talk about a "loose" graphic interpretation. Which brings us to the point (and I promise not to bring it up in the reviews of Volumes 4 & 5) that all of these titles are direct emulations of the arcade originals. There is no "translation" or anything hokey about these versions. These are the real deal (sorry Mr. Holyfield). Namco's Museum Volume 1 featured the original "greatest" driving game in Pole Position, and now we have the sequel to it in Vol 3. Yes, Pole Position II, offering two additional tracks and a test oval, is here in all its original splendor. Lastly, the two "throw in" games are Tower of Druaga and Phozon. Druaga is a "get the key, slice the green blobs, get out the door and move on to the next level of similar design with increasing bad guys" type of game. Nothing special. Phozon is a neat little 3-D puzzle type of game where you have to build a chemical compound to match the example while avoiding the atoms that try to breakup your creation. A neat surprise in this

Eric

PS EXTREME — THE BOTTOM LINE

94%

COMPATIBILITY

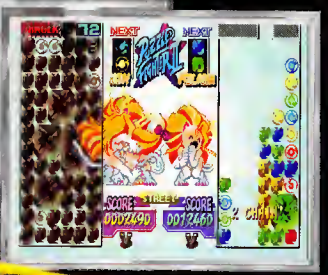
1or2 Players

Well, well, well. Look what we have here ... Dig Dug, Galaxian, Ms. Pac Man, Pole Position II, and a couple of games to be named later. Wawl Talk about some heavy hitters in the classic arcade arena. Heck, those four titles alone garnered enough quarters to pay Neil O'Donnel's salary for a couple of years (By the way, nice free agent pickup, New York). Anyway, to the 100,000 or so of you who have already purchased Vol.1 (and rented Vol. 2), it's time to break out the checkbook and get the best Volume yet into your collection!

GOLD X

SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY CAPCOM



Just when I think Capcom has finally exhausted every possible variation on the Street Fighter series — much like I've managed to use the same joke about Blueberry Pop-Tarts for the past five years in various magazines — they come through again. But this latest variation is, I think, their smartest and most original move yet: combining the everlasting appeal of Street Fighter with the everlasting appeal of Tetris (the original, not the feeble Tetris Plus). Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo — flawlessly converted from Capcom's arcade coin-op — has one or two players dropping colored gems into place while adorable "super-deformed" (i.e., kiddie) versions of characters from the Street Fighter II and DarkStalkers series of fighting games duke it out in the middle of the screen, exchanging blows and high-pitched sound bites.

The cast of characters, in alphabetical order, because I'm anal-retentive that way: Chun-Li (she's hyphenating her name now?), Donovan (the stern protector of a little girl), Felicia (the catwoman with the delightfully revealing costume), Hsien-Ko (the Chinese ghostess with the mostest), Ken (blond, buff, and bitchin'), Morrigan (the Scottish succubus), Ryu (the one and only), and Sakura (Japanese schoolgirl and Ryu stalker).

There are five types of gems in SPF (Super Puzzle Fighter, not Sun Protection Factor, smarty-pants). Regular gems come in four colors, and bond into larger gems (called Power Gems) when groups of them are clustered together. The circular Crash Gems also come in four colors, and destroy gems of their own color. Counter Gems are gems with a timer in the middle; when the number reaches zero, it turns into a regular gem. Diamond Gems clear the screen of every gem of the first color they touch. To "attack" your opponent, you simply drop a Crash Gem onto a regular gem or another Crash Gem of the

EX RATED

same color, which destroys your gems and sends some Counter Gems to your opponent's side.

SPF's "chain combo" system gives the gameplay as much back-and-forth action as a fighting game; when you break a series of gems with a single drop, you score extra points and send more Counter Gems to your opponent. For example, let's say you have a pile of red gems with a yellow Crash Gem on top and a pile of yellow gems below. You break the red gems, which causes the yellow Crash Gem to fall and smash the pile of yellow gems. That's a two-hit combo, my friend. (If you still don't get it, the game has a quick tutorial demo to enlighten thee.)

Each character in SPF has a unique Counter Gem Pattern; this is the formation in which their Counter Gems fall onto the opponent's side of the screen. Learning how to take advantage of these patterns, and how to defend against them, gives Super Puzzle Fighter surprising depth, as you learn how to use your opponent's Counter Gems to your advantage. It also means that characters with more complex patterns are better than ones with simpler patterns, which is an important nugget of knowledge. (Would-be boss and hidden character, Dan's pattern is the lamest of all; his Counter Gems are all red, so that the more aggressively he plays, the more he hurts himself.)

Other nice touches include three hidden characters (Akuma, Dan, and Devilot from the Capcom game Cyberbots) and being able to taunt your opponent during the match. It all looks great and plays dandy.

SPF's only real flaw is that, whether because of its relative complexity or its cartoony violence, it doesn't have the female appeal of other action/puzzle games. My Bust-A-Move-loving girlfriend, for example, liked it about as much as she likes the KISS posters adorning my office/bedroom wall — which is to say, not one iota. (By the way, what the hell is an iota?)

Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo is the best of its type on the PlayStation, and a great change of pace for fighting-game fans who want to expand their horizons AND their minds. A good one-player game and a great two-player game.

Zach

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME 86%

COMPATIBILITY

1or 2 Players

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SILVER X

PSYCHIC FORCE

PUBLISHED BY ACCLAIM — DEVELOPED BY TAITO

A few weeks ago, I came into work ready to receive my review projects for this month. Sure enough, Greg the Slave Driver had already set aside my assignments and had gone home early himself. Well I heard Psychic Force, developed by Taito and published by Acclaim, was a fighting game, so when I got home, in it went. After recently reviewing one of the worst home fighting games ever (see Nov. 96 review of KOF '95) I sorta had a pre-conceived notion of what this "unheard of" fighter was gonna' play like. Heh ... I was wrong! I was pleasantly surprised by the new and innovative fighting techniques, used in creating this sleeper.

Let's start off with the story. In the future, certain warriors have been born with superhuman powers. These beings are known as Psybers, or Psyber Warriors. Feared by the general population and shunned by humanity, to the Psybers, their powers were deemed a curse. With nowhere to go, they were forcefully recruited by various government agencies which sought to utilize and exploit their special abilities. Soon after, they united and rebelled under the leadership of an all-powerful Psyber known only as "Keith". Keith promised them a new life... and a place to live in peace. Soon they found their leader had ulterior motives, as Keith declared war on mankind, swearing to reign destruction on all who opposed. That's pretty much were you take over. After watching a WAY cool japanese-style animation sequence, describing, in part, the events that lead up to this battle, I arrived at the main menu.

Here's the rundown of choices: Arcade Mode, classic 1p vs cpu; Story Mode, each time you win a fight, you learn more about your quest; Training Mode, where you get to practice all of your moves on a computer dummy and learn how much damage combos and attacks dish out; Versus Mode, Human vs Human action; and Options Mode, where you can customize the game to your liking. After practicing for about 30 minutes with a few of the characters, I headed into Story Mode.

Gameplay was totally different than anything I had expected. Your character and opponent battle inside a 3D enclosed cube "Kekkai", and a computer controlled camera (which represents your view as the player) keeps all the action clear and visible. During a battle, if either player touches a wall, they take damage. In addition, you have full movement around the cube-like arena... making for some awesome camera angles. Once you get used to the con-

EX RATED

trols, which are very basic in the first place, you will have no trouble orienting yourself within the arena. Since each of the eight fighters is a master of a different domain, such as Fire, Light, Time ... etc., arenas look completely different from each other, which also adds to the longevity. There's nothing worse than looking at the same thing for three or four hours. Anyhow, each character is controlled with the D-pad and three buttons, which makes it easy for beginners to jump right in. The buttons are: Light Attack, Heavy Attack and Guard. By pressing either of the attack buttons, you will punch/kick your opponent or send a projectile at them, all depending on distance. In addition to these simple attacks, Psychic Force also incorporates a decent combo attack system, which is limited, but still entertaining. I wish Taito had left room for user created combos, but hey ... it's their first attempt at such a thing, so I cut them come slack. Another cool feature is the Psychic Meter. This bar symbolizes how much Psychic Power your character has. It depletes when you use a Psychic Attack or an Emergency Barrier. Don't fret though ... it charges back up, plus you can make it charge even faster by holding down all three buttons.

Graphics are excellent. I especially liked the true-3D backgrounds which really give you the feeling you are up high in the sky. After match victories, the camera zooms in for a closeup and shows you, in detail, the character's face and personality. Also, each individual special move is very well drawn/rendered, so you never miss out on any of the action. The sound effects are also very good, but some seemed to surface a few too many times. I little more variety would have been nice. The music is about average. Nothing jumped out and "got" me, but I didn't mind listening to it for hours on end.

The Straight Dope: Psychic Force offers a wonderful new twist to the fighting game genre. Not only is the game completely three-dimensional, you never fight on land. My only gripe is the lack of characters and average audio. Overall, Psychic Force is a very well rounded product and, if you like fighting games, or just like new concepts, I highly recommend you give it a rent.

Ben

PS EXTREME — THE BOTTOM LINE

87%

COMPATIBILITY

1or2 Players

The Straight Dope: Psychic Force offers a wonderful new twist to the fighting game genre. Not only is the game completely three-dimensional, you never fight on land. My only gripe is the lack of characters and average audio. Overall, Psychic Force is a very well rounded product and, if you like fighting games, or just like new concepts, I highly recommend you give it a rent.

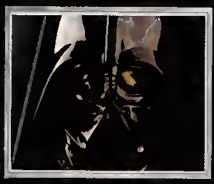
SILVER X

REBEL ASSAULT II

PUBLISHED BY LUCASARTS — DEVELOPED BY FACTOR 5

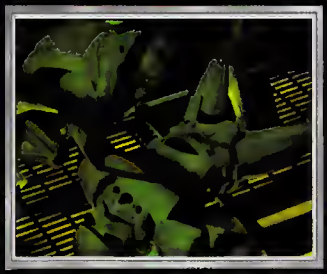
Here it is, early December and the Star Wars buzz is starting to grow to a fever pitch. There's the new toy line of action figures, lightsabers and vehicles from Kenner, the recent, digitally remastered and remixed trilogy on video and laser disc, a steady tide of books, comics and trading cards that revolve around the Star Wars universe, the highly anticipated re-release of the trilogy films on the big screen with added special effects and footage, and, of course, let's not forget the video games. Three titles have come from LucasArts around and about the same time this month: Shadows of the Empire for the Nintendo 64 and Dark Forces and Rebel Assault II for the PlayStation (see last month's issue for the review of Dark Forces).

If you've been into video gaming for the last couple of years, or are a Star Wars fanatic, then you've probably heard of, or have played, the original Rebel Assault on one or another gaming platform. Originally released as one of the first CD-based games for the PC, this title eventually made its way to a few of the other CD-driven systems, such as the now-defunct 3DO and Sega CD. The game was basically a series of FMV clips with "shooting gallery-style" game play layed over it. The sequel, Rebel Assault II, continues along these lines, but is a much sharper product.



In the original Rebel Assault, most of the graphics had that "hand drawn" look to them — probably because they were — and the characters themselves looked ridiculously funny when trying to lip-sync to the dialogue (you know, in a Monty Python kind of way). With Rebel II, the developers decided to combine real live-action video footage for the characters — this being the first time any new Star Wars footage has been filmed since Return of the Jedi (that cheesy made-for-TV Ewok special doesn't count). The video is then mixed with high-quality, CG-rendered backgrounds to create a very realistic Star Wars experience.

The sub-games that make up Rebel Assault II vary from level to level, but most have you either shooting at targets such



as Stormtroopers or TIE Fighters, or piloting some form of ship through asteroid fields or the Empire's strongholds — or shooting at various targets while piloting some form of ship. Although all of them look beautiful and genuinely recreate that Star Wars atmosphere, they are only fun to play once, maybe twice, but that's it. There is very limited replayability. This is the game's major flaw and what keeps it down in the Silver category, rather than achieving the illustrious "Gold" status.

If you're familiar with the PC version of Rebel II, you should be pleasantly surprised with the new enhancements that were thoughtfully added to make use of the PlayStation's advanced hardware capabilities. Some of the PC's first-person shooting sequences were retooled to offer a third-person, behind-your-ship perspective, giving the player more feeling of control. Many of the video sequences have been re-rendered in real-time 3D and 24-bit color, resulting in the best, crystal clear, VHS quality video that I have seen, yet, on the PlayStation. The sound has also been enhanced, adding motion picture quality, 16-bit stereo surround sound.

So, the breakdown goes something like this: Rebel Assault II is a high caliber/high production value game that authentically recreates a believable Star Wars experience. Although, at its basic core, it's really nothing more than an FMV shooter that can be beaten in a few hours, tops, and probably won't hold your attention for more than one or two play-throughs. I know, you've probably read hundreds of reviews that end with this sentence, but it holds true: If you're a fan of the Star Wars saga, you can't miss this game; if you're looking for deep gameplay and long-term playability, you might want to look elsewhere.

Greg

PS EXTREME — THE BOTTOM LINE

84%

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

The breakdown goes something like this: Rebel Assault II is a high caliber/high production value game that authentically recreates a believable Star Wars experience. Although, at its basic core, it's really nothing more than an FMV shooter that can be beaten in a few hours, tops, and probably won't hold your attention for more than one or two play-throughs. I know, you've probably read hundreds of reviews that end with this sentence, but it holds true: If you're a fan of the Star Wars saga, you can't miss this game, if you're looking for deep gameplay and long-term playability, you might want to look elsewhere.

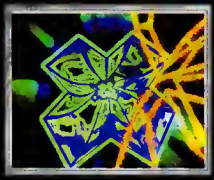
SILVER X

TEMPEST X

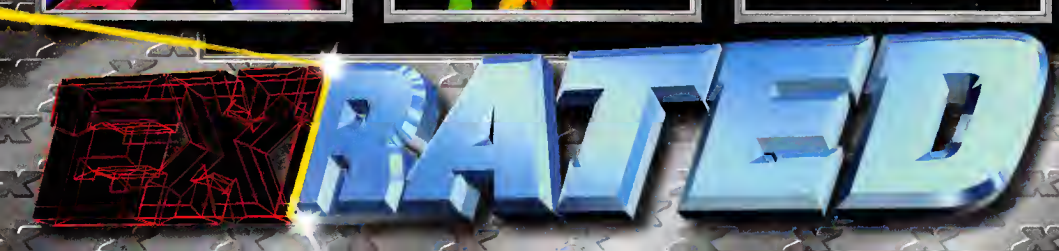
PUBLISHED BY INTERPLAY — DEVELOPED BY HIGH VOLTAGE

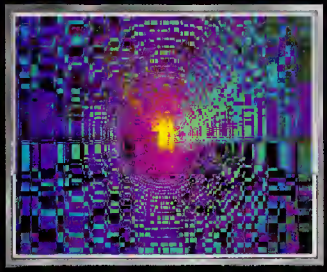
As a veteran Jaguar owner and supporter — hell, I wrote an official strategy guide for Atari (the royalties from which were enough to buy three whole packs of Hubba Bubba) — I think I'm entitled to declare that Tempest 2000 was one of the very few Jaguar titles remotely worth anyone's time or money.

Created by Jeff Minter, an Atari fanatic, programming genius, and sheep lover (long story), Tempest 2000 beefed up the basic shoot-'em-up action of the original Tempest — in which you controlled a cannon on the periphery of a wireframe "web," shooting inward at the wireframe enemies emerging from the distance — with "64-bit" graphics, power-ups, and the coolest techno music ever pumped out of a cartridge. Tempest 2000 also included the "original" Tempest, which I've placed in quotes because it wasn't the authentic game, but a version that Minter programmed entirely from his fond memories of the 1981 coin-op. (He was never supplied with a real Tempest machine to work with — I guess the folks at Atari were too busy spending money designing a CD-ROM drive that looked like a toilet.)



Tempest X is a PlayStation remake of Minter's Jaguar remake, but the only major change High Voltage has made is adding more audiovisual flash to the mix. There are now Redbook Audio versions of the cartridge tunes, and they rival Loaded and WipeOut XL for the best techno tracks in a PlayStation game; the wireframe webs are now texture-mapped; there are dramatic lens flares as power-ups zoom toward you; and the graphics are coated with so much psychedelic color cycling that I think this game is the closest I'll ever get to an acid trip. (Except for the time I took several deep breaths of nitrous oxide at the dentist's office — it was my own little peek into the world of Grateful





Dead fans.)

Tempest X has three gameplay modes: X, Duel, and Traditional. (High Voltage eliminated the Jaguar version's Plus variation, which redundantly combined elements of X and Traditional.) X is the 100-level one-player extravaganza, letting you blast wireframe foes on a succession of increasingly intricate webs, advancing from circles to crosses, spirals, and figure-8s. All of Tempest 2000's traditional power-ups are here: enhanced lasers, a screen-clearing super-zapper, the ability to leap off the web, and an A.I. droid that follows you around the web and doubles your firepower. High Voltage has even thrown in a couple of new enemies to increase the already-high difficulty level.

Duel is a split-screen two-player mode where the players shoot at each other from opposite sides of a web while a purple sphere in the middle spawns red and blue baddies. If a player is hit by a baddie or by the other player's bullets, he kicks the bucket. Each player has a mirror in front of his cannon to reflect bullets, but it disappears when the player shoots, adding a touch of strategy. Truth be told, though, Duel just isn't much fun — Tempest wasn't meant to be a two-player game. There's also a silly flaw in that if you choose a three- or five-game match, you HAVE to play all three or five games, even if one player wins enough games to take the match. What up wit dat (he says in his feeble attempt at a gangsta voice)?

Traditional is the old-school Tempest, but it's still Minter's semi-accurate version instead of the real deal; PlayStation users who've been spoiled by the pixel-perfect Namco and Williams retro-gaming collections will be disappointed. (Purists like myself will fill their Depend undergarments to capacity at the news that the upcoming Atari Arcade Classics will feature the real Tempest.)

Tempest X is a great conversion of a great game. The Duel mode is a throwaway, and the Traditional mode isn't accurate enough, but the X mode will have you happily shooting from dusk 'til dawn.

Zach

PS EXTREME — THE BOTTOM LINE

85%

COMPATIBILITY

1or2 Players

As a veteran Jaguar owner ond supparter — hell, I wrote an officiol strategy guide for Atari (the royalties from which were enough to buy three whole packs of Hubba Bubba) — I think I'm entitled to declare that Tempest 2000 was ane of the very few Jaguar titles remately worth anyone's time or money. Interploy's Tempest X is a great canversian af a great game. The Duel mode is a throwaway, and the Traditianal mode isn't accurate enough, but the X mode will have you happily shooting from dusk 'til dawn.

SILVER X

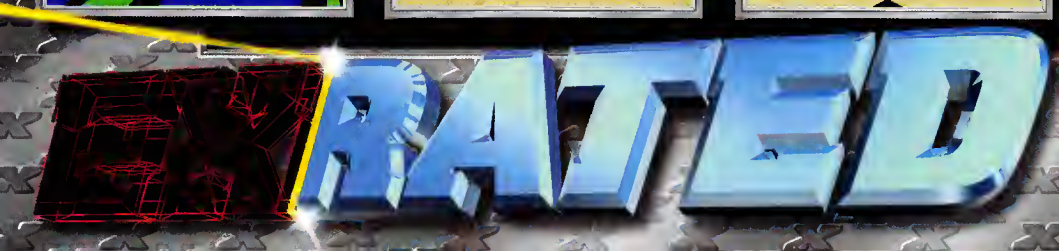
TEN PIN ALLEY

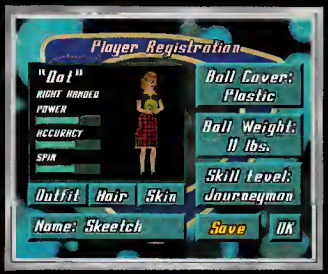
PUBLISHED BY ASC GAMES — DEVELOPED BY ADRENALIN ENTERTAINMENT

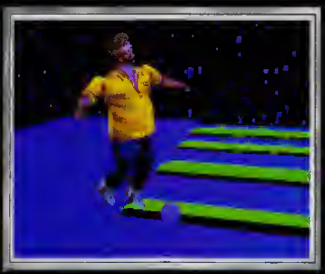
You're probably thinking "Zach forgot to take his medication again" if you glanced at the score I gave Ten Pin Alley before starting to read this review. C'mon, now — 95% for a BOWLING game? What's next, a 98% score for Space Jam? But I'm giving it a rating that high, because it's that great a game. It's the lunch-break entertainment of choice at the Dimension Publishing offices (where rumor has it that Greg, Dave and Tim are playing for money now); it's made me miss several deadlines because I was playing it instead of writing; and I practically had to arm-wrestle Alex Andrews for the right to review it, which NEVER happens with jaded gamers like ourselves. Ten Pin Alley is, quite simply, a perfect combination of realism and silliness.

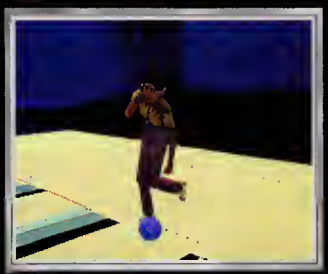
Let's analyze the realism first: up until now, video game systems simply weren't powerful enough to calculate the multitude of ways in which a frame of bowling pins could move. Therefore, the pins broke in one of several dozen "canned" sequences, which meant that most decent gamers could learn to bowl a 300 — bowling's equivalent of baseball's perfect game — very quickly. (I remember scoring 300 at League Bowling, a NEO*GEO pin-whacking sim from quite a few years back, on my SECOND game.) 32-bit systems like the PlayStation, however, have more than enough number-crunching power to handle mind-bending physics algorithms, and Ten Pin Alley takes full advantage. The pins in this game slide and spin so realistically that it couldn't look any better if they'd motion-captured the suckers. The programmers claim there are over five million possibilities, and I've probably seen about two million of 'em by now.

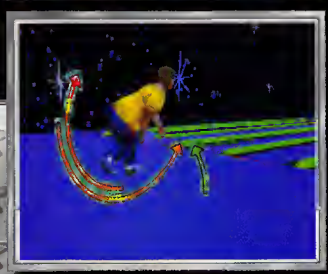
The high degree of realism doesn't stop with the pins. The skills of your bowler (strength, aim, and spin), along with the weight and surface of the bowling ball, affect how it moves down the lane. Ten Pin Alley even simulates the drying of lane dressing (oiling) over time, which means you have to constantly tweak your aim to keep scoring strikes. The aiming is done with expertly designed power-meter system that has the look and feel of a golf game and requires precise timing to hit the "sweet spots." (Three difficulty lev-











els let you make those spots painfully small.)

When you take all these factors into consideration, bowling a 300 game in Ten Pen Alley is about as easy as real life — which is to say, you're more likely to get to second base with Cindy Crawford. That's the game's biggest appeal, though; you keep making tiny adjustments to your technique, constantly working to find the perfect stroke. Oh, man, this is gonna sound so weird, but it's true: you can FEEL a strike as it leaves your character's hands. It's a sensation that I've never before felt in a video game.

The flawless gameplay is complemented by hilarious graphics that capture the lighter side of bowling, a healthy attitude that's reflected within the game; one of the team logos features the acronym IOFB, which most bowlers will know stands for "It's Only [naughty word unfit for publication] Bowling."

The cast of a dozen characters — which includes fat guys, tall guys, leggy babes, pre-adolescents, and nerds — react to strikes, spares and gutter balls in over-the-top cartoon style. (Screwing up on the power meter earns the best animations of all.)

I feel extremely guilty nit-picking such a marvelous product, but that's what being a dastardly reviewer is all about, so here we go. First, the instruction manual assumes an intermediate knowledge of bowling, so it doesn't clearly explain a few of the game options. Why would you want to turn off lane dressing drying? What are the differences between plastic, urethane, and resin balls? The horde of bowling sites on the World Wide Web gave me the answers — is there any scrap of data on the planet that doesn't have a Web page? — but the manual should've at least briefly explained these options. The only other complaint is that a few of the characters are almost identical in appearance, although their skills and animations are different.

I would've liked more unique character designs instead of two fat guys, two thin guys, et cetera. At least the game lets you tweak your character's skin, hair, and outfit colors for that personal touch (and some hilarious Dennis Rodman-esque skin/hair combos, but I digress).

Ten Pin Alley is a great party game, the best bowling game ever made, AND one of the best sports games ever made. I see myself playing it as much in a few years as I play it now, and that's something I've said maybe a half-dozen times in the eight years I've been reviewing games. Unless you absolutely detest bowling, Ten Pin Alley absolutely belongs in your PlayStation library.

Zach

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

95%

COMPATIBILITY

1 to 6 Players

You're probably thinking "Zach forgot to take his medication again" if you glanced at the score I gave Ten Pin Alley before starting to read this review. C'mon, now — 95% for a BOWLING game? What's next, a 98% score for Space Jam? But I'm giving it a rating that high, because it's a great party game, the best bowling game ever made, AND one of the best sports games ever made. I see myself playing it as much in a few years as I play it now, and that's something I've said maybe a half-dozen times in the eight years I've been reviewing games. Unless you absolutely detest bowling, Ten Pin Alley absolutely belongs in your PlayStation library.

GOLD

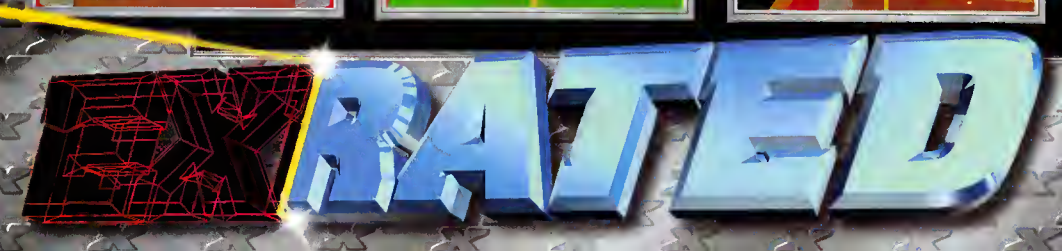
VIRTUAL POOL

PUBLISHED BY INTERPLAY — DEVELOPED BY CELERIS INC.

PC/CD-Rom users will certainly recognize the name of this fine billiards simulation, as Virtual Pool from Celeris & Interplay was one of the bigger sellers in the summer of '95. Now available to the Playstation owners with but a few differences, '97 should turn out to be just as successful for Virtual Pool.

The first thought that should come to mind when looking at the pretty pictures is "wow, look at all the varied camera angles and perspectives". If that wasn't your first thought, then take another look. Check out the size of the cue-ball, or the corner tilt, or the blimp like perspective from high in the sky. Any viewing angle that your demented little mind could think of, is possible to create in Virtual Pool. All of these views are possible, and if I didn't know any better (and I don't), I would guess that the possibilities are endless. Heck, when I first started trying out the game, I spent so much time twisting, flipping, turning, zooming in and out, and rotating the pool table so much that I was nearly overcome with motion sickness. I haven't felt like that since the last episode on the Teacup ride!

Pool is a game of angles and manipulation. The more angles you have to choose from the better you can manipulate that little white ball into doing what it is you need it to do. So, if your selection possibilities are infinite, then the only thing keeping you from becoming the second coming of Minnesota Fats is your ability to comprehend the chosen angle. That's right, flunkies, your Sophomore Geometry class has now come back to haunt you. You thought you could sleep your way through class and, in the big picture of things, understanding basic Geometry wouldn't have much of an effect on your gaming life. Oh, how very wrong you were! However, for those of you in search of the perfect angle and not knowing anyone smarter than your-



self, there is always the trace function which will allow you to see in which direction the balls will travel should you choose such a shot. Yup, a virtual cheat sheet, or in this case, a "practice aide".

So, what's your game? Do you like 8-ball, 9-ball, or straight pool? How about a game of rotation? All of these versions are playable against a friend or a host of computer simulated opponents. One of the drawbacks to playing the tougher computer players is that, like in chess, they tend to "think" about there upcoming shot for awhile. There's also an option that lets you practice some trick shots if you're up to it. I found the "History of Pool" to be quite interesting and a bit funny as well. Did you know that the game of pool dates back to the 14th century and was more of a descendent of Croquet? Now you do. There's also a video on pool techniques that will come in handy for learning some of the intricacies and nuances of the game of pool. One thing I don't understand though, is why the soundtrack is such a Sammy Hagar inspired lot. What gives? Are all you biker dudes with Playstations in your saddle bags the target audience for this game? Thank the big guy for the ol' music "on/off" option.

If you enjoy the game of pool at all, then Virtual Pool is a must buy. If you don't, well, it may have something to do with that Geometry class way back when. All in all, Virtual Pool should be a game that all players can have a fun time with, and the shelf life should be eternal. Again, in closing, I leave you with the immortal words of Pebbles Flintstone ..."Shoot Pool".

Eric

PS EXTREME — THE BOTTOM LINE

85%

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players

Mouse Compatible

PC/CD-Rom users will certainly recognize the name of this fine billiards simulation, as Virtual Pool from Celeris & Interplay was one of the bigger sellers in the summer of '95. Now available to the Playstation owners with but a few differences, '97 should turn out to be just as successful for Virtual Pool. If you enjoy the game of pool of all, then Virtual Pool is a must buy and should be a game that all players can have a fun time with — the shelf life should be eternal. Again, in closing, I leave you with the immortal words of Pebbles Flintstone ..."Shoot Pool".

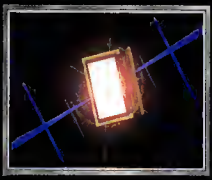
SILVER X

PERSONA

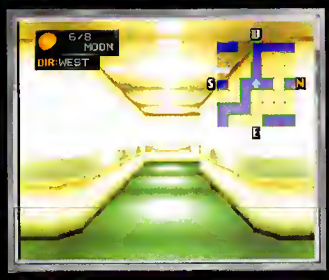
PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY ATLUS

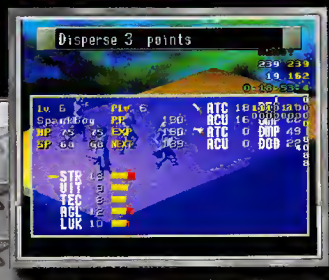
If there is one category that the PlayStation is lacking game titles for, I would have to say it's RPG's. Slowly but surely, though, more and more role-players are emerging, pleasing thousands of gamers who just can't wait for FF7 (uhh, that's Final Fantasy 7). This month, I was assigned Persona, by Atlus — a new-school RPG by a company that many may not have even heard of. Always ready to jump knee-deep into a good RPG, I accepted the task at hand and went to work. Let me get something out of the way right now ... Persona is NOT for the weak-minded. The game features tons of different modes and options, and can easily induce frustration among those with little patience. The battle sequences are very strategic and require a fair amount of planning in order to come out unscathed. Of course, as with most other games, once you overcome the initial learning curve, the game becomes quite entertaining.

Persona is very different from other RPG's. This is good, yes ... but also leads to some unseen complications. You see, each event takes place in a completely different mode than the others. Example: When exploring dungeons (buildings, structures), you are in a first-person style view; but when you enter a room within a structure, the view switches to a 3/4 perspective. In addition to both of those perspectives, when you leave structures, you are thrust into another, top down/slightly behind view. Let me not forget to mention the completely different looking battle sequences (sounds like a lot huh?). One disadvantage to having so many different views, is the load time, which gets a bit excessive at times. At one point I found myself waiting for 20+ seconds, just for entering a room. Another drawback to the multiple views, is the control; each view employs a different configuration and can get a bit confusing. Many times in the 3/4 view, I found myself frustrated because the directions I pressed on the d-pad, would move me in the totally wrong direction. Oh well, after a few hours I got over it and gameplay became more enjoyable.



OK, the meat ... What makes up a good RPG? I split that equally between gameplay and story (sometimes it can look like crap and still be fun). The story and dialogue





were very comedic. You have a group of adolescents that you trek through the game with, and sometimes they don't get along with each other. Basically, you have to learn why you gained this special "persona" power, which allows you to call upon altered versions of yourself (sometimes good, other times bad) and what to do with it. By changing into different versions of yourself, you can overcome even the greatest of foes (although it's not as easy as I make it out to be). As far as gameplay goes ... Persona is a winner. Not only do you switch modes depending on where you are and what you are doing, but you are forced to use your brain. The biggest example of this is when you get into a battle. First you have the option to talk to your opponents and provoke emotions, which change their fighting style. Then you have to put your group in a formation which best suits the battle at hand. At first, all this doesn't matter but, as the game progresses, it becomes more and more important to have a well designed line of attack.

"Well, how does it look?" you ask ... "Pretty darn good!", if you ask me. Each mode is totally different and Atlus put a lot of work into making each look as good as the next. The outside structure view is my personal favorite, because of the detail and precision put into creating a life-like city (It even has telephone poles!). The mode suffering the most in the graphics category has to be the 3/4 in-room view. It's very old-school and could definitely use some touch-ups. Often it's hard to tell characters apart. I did, however, enjoy watching the alternate persona attacks, as each accurately reflected my characters alter ego.

Audio time! BGM was a bit on the average side, as I found myself wishing it was off when I was in one area for too long. It's not that it is bad ... just ... repetitive. The sound effects were also a bit plain, and sometimes bordering on obnoxious. After a while of playing, though, I got used to them and they weren't a problem. Overall the Graphics and Audio fit it nicely.

In conclusion: the positive aspects of Persona greatly outweighed the negatives. Frustrating control and laggard gameplay are really the only two things keeping it from Gold status. Persona could also benefit from a facelift in the battle and 3/4 modes; but, overall, it has what it needs to keep an RPG fan (like myself) immersed and intrigued. Give it a whirl/rent and see if it's for you before you shell out those hard earned bucks for Persona. It's definitely for the RPG fan!

Ben

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

86%

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

In conclusion: the positive aspects of Persona, greatly outweighed the negatives. Frustrating control and laggard gameplay are really the only two things keeping it from Gold status. Persona could also benefit from a facelift in the battle and 3/4 modes; but, overall, it has what it needs to keep an RPG fan (like myself) immersed and intrigued. Give it a whirl/rent and see if it's for you before you shell out those hard earned bucks for Persona. It's definitely for the RPG fan!

SILVER X

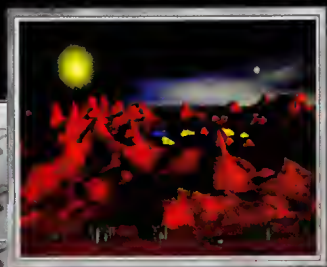
THE ATARI COLLECTION 1

PUBLISHED BY MIDWAY — DEVELOPED BY DIGITAL ECLIPSE

For those of us who've been around the video game scene for a while, the current interest in "retro gaming" is no surprise. For the most part, these arcade "classics" are the epitome of what gaming is all about: fun and simple to play with endless replay value. Unfortunately, most of the games being developed today are designed to take advantage of new technologies without much consideration to the fun-factor. So, if you're a little tired of your "true 3D, full motion video, motion captured, first-person prespective, SGI-rendered, shooter, action/adventure, 38th-century sports title", relax, Midway Home Entertainment (AKA Williams Entertainment) has the answer. By the time you read this, the Atari Collection 1 will have hit a retail shelf near you.

The Atari Collection brings together some of the all time great video games on one CD and, unlike some of the other "classic" disks around, there are no obscure, never-before-heard-of, titles in this collection. Battle Zone, Centipede, Missle Command, Asteroids, Tempest and Super Break Out, represent the Mecca of classic arcade gaming. If my mother knew how much of my "gas" money was plunked into Missile Command, while I was in college, she would've had me committed. I've never experienced a more addictive game in my life. Centipede represents the Holy Grail for me; I've been searching for a perfect Centipede Cocktail table for quite some time now, and will only consider the decorating of my new home complete when I finally acquire it. Well enough of my personal problems, we've got some games to play.

For those of you who haven't played these titles, a brief description is in order. Missile Command is the ultimate shooter. Defend your cities from incoming ICBMs by sending your own ICBMs to intercept them. Oh, if only we had Reagan's "Star Wars" option. Centipede is the game that everyone played. (even my



Grandmother.) Shoot that pesky insect to pieces before he and his garden variety friends kill you. Super Break Out has addictive qualities that make tobacco look like baby formula. Asteroids was the first smash-hit that had everyone shooting the daylights out of those floating rocks. Battlezone is the vector graphics tank game that is still a classic with the hand-held crowd, and finally, Tempest: the classic vector shooter that's receiving a little updated attention with Interplay in the form of Tempest X (see the review elsewhere in this issue).

Like most of the retro collections available today, The Atari Collection 1 includes some FMV highlights of interviews with the original designers and brief histories of each game. At first, it seems a little gratuitous, but you soon realize it's almost a must-see segment. It's sort of like the movie "Back to School". No matter how many times you've seen it, if you're flipping channels and it's on, you're watching it! Ah, but I digress; let's get back to the games, shall we? This is not the first time these titles have been made available in a collection. In fact, emulations have been available via the internet on PCs and Macs for some time now and Microsoft has also published a collection of these games for home computers.

For the most part, this collection is a true emulation of the arcade originals, some of the sound seems to be digitized, especially with Asteroids; and Centipede, which was originally a vertical screen, is a little smashed in the Horizontal format (there is an option to play it vertically, although you'd have to tilt your TV sideways). The gameplay, however is dead on. The one frustrating element of the package, however, is the fact that the control with the standard Sony controller, or any other controller for that matter, is simply inadequate. These games scream for a track ball; Super Break Out is virtually impossible to play without one, and Missile Command and Centipede just aren't the same without it. These complaints aside, The Atari Collection is a must-buy for anyone fortunate enough to have played the originals when they were new and a worthy purchase for those interested in how us old timers paved the way for you Gen-X slackers.

Alex

PS EXTREME — THE BOTTOM LINE

85%

COMPATIBILITY

- 1 or 2 Players
- Mouse Compatible
- Analog Joystick Compatible

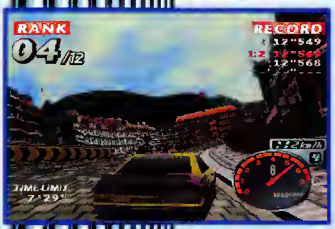
The one frustrating element of the package, however, is the fact that the control with the standard Sony controller, or any other controller for that matter, is simply inadequate. These games scream for a track ball; Super Break Out is virtually impossible to play without one, and Missile Command and Centipede just aren't the same without it. These complaints aside, The Atari Collection is a must-buy for anyone fortunate enough to have played the originals when they were new and a worthy purchase for those interested in how us old timers paved the way for you Gen-X slackers.

SILVER X

RAGE RACER

NAMCO • AVAILABLE NOW • JAPAN

Every now and then, an example of why you should occasionally check out the available import titles comes along. This time it's Namco's Rage Racer. Not due out in the US until late summer of '97, the Japanese version hit retail last December. Rage Racer is more an evolution of the Ridge Racer product than a sequel to it. The concept is entirely different. This time, you're racing for money/points, in order to purchase more powerful vehicles that you will need to compete in the next series of races. Each series has three courses in which you must finish first, in order to move on to the next level. The courses are the same in the pursuing levels, however, the competition is much stronger. There are additional tracks, if you place first in each series, which make Rage Racer a much larger game than its two cousins. Graphically, the game is much darker than RR and RRR, but the scenery is a little more detailed. Instead of a beach feeling to the courses, you definitely get the feeling that you're driving through the streets of San Francisco, as the bulk of the courses are a series of steep hills. Going up is a little slow, but coming down is breathtaking. If you're into imports, check this one out; if not, don't worry, Rage Racer will be arriving shortly, here in the good ol' US.

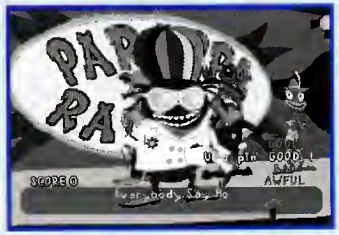


EXPORT

PARAPPA THE RAPPER

SONY • AVAILABLE NOW • JAPAN

Zach Meston presents: Hit it ... this here is a game about a hip-hop rappin' puppy; the gameplay's really simple and the music's really funny. The object of the game is to bust rhymes throughout six stages; you simply press the buttons as the background music rages. As each verse of the current rap is shown upon the screen, you match its funky rhythm with a beat like a machine. The timing of your presses is the hard part of the game: if you're too fast or slow, your score will show the world you're lame. Peace! We out! (And speaking of out, I promise that the preceding is my first and last attempt at poetry in the pages of PSExtreme.) Parappa documents the misadventures of our young hero, as he uses rap music (and his catchphrase mantra "I gotta' believe!") to solve his problems. After being confronted by bullies in a fast-food joint, Parappa takes karate lessons from a martial-arts master who happens to have an onion for a head. After Parappa's love interest is taken for a joyride, the license-free Parappa takes a driving test from a gruff instructor who happens to be a moose. The other four levels are just as silly, introducing us to a Rastafarian frog, a frugal-gourmet chicken, and a dreadlocked octopus. The game's unique visual approach — all the characters are displayed as animated paper-thin cutouts — is explained by its name: "parappa," I'm told, means "paper-thin" in Japanese. The chances of Parappa reaching the States are slim, since Sony's had poor sales with other Japanese-flavored games, but this is one import that's completely playable. All of the rapping is in English, and the option screen even lets you toggle the subtitles from Japanese into our native tongue. You'll beat this game very quickly—if it takes you more than an hour, it's time to have some coordination surgically implanted — but it's so fun to watch and sing along with it that you'll keep playing long after you've beaten it. You'll also bust it out at parties, since it's so easy to learn. Definitely worth checking out.



The PS*Extreme* Historical Ranking Chart

EXCAVATE is the section where we dig up the last six months of our old ratings and present them on one easy-to-read page, along with a little explanation/breakdown of our rating system. Use this as your buying guide throughout the year and as a reference for those older games that you might have missed (or wish you had).

PLATINUM GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Tomb Raider	December 1996	99%
NCAA GameBreaker	October 1996	98%
Tekken 2	September 1996	98%
Crash Bandicoot	September 1996	98%
NHL Face Off '97	December 1996	98%
GOLD GAMES	**ISSUE**	**RATING**
Twisted Metal 2	December 1996	97%
Robotron X	December 1996	96%
FIFA '97	January 1996	95%
Motor Toon Grand Prix	October 1996	95%
Formula 1	November 1996	95%
Star Gladiator	October 1996	93%
Die Hard Trilogy	September 1996	93%
Jumping Flash 2	August 1996	93%
Disruptor	December 1996	93%
Bubsy 3D	December 1996	93%
Pandemonium	December 1996	93%
In the Zone 2	January 1996	93%
Ridge Racer Revolution	September 1996	92%
Namco Museum Vol. 1	August 1996	92%
Tecmo's Deception	November 1996	92%
Machine Head	December 1996	92%
Destruction Derby 2	December 1996	92%
Tunnel B1	December 1996	92%
Street Fighter Alpha 2	October 1996	91%
Worms	September 1996	91%
Power Move Pro Wrestling	January 1996	91%
Contra: Legacy of War	December 1996	90%
Black Dawn	November 1996	90%
King's Field II	January 1996	90%
Bust-A-Move 2	August 1996	90%
SILVER GAMES	**ISSUE**	**RATING**
NBA Jam Extreme	December 1996	89%
Pitball	December 1996	89%
MLB Pennant Race	December 1996	89%
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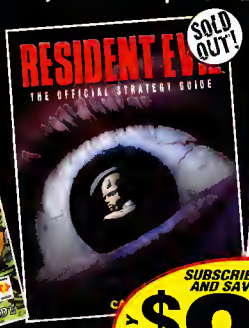

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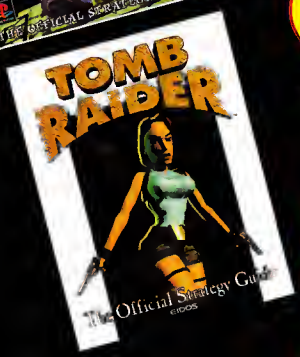

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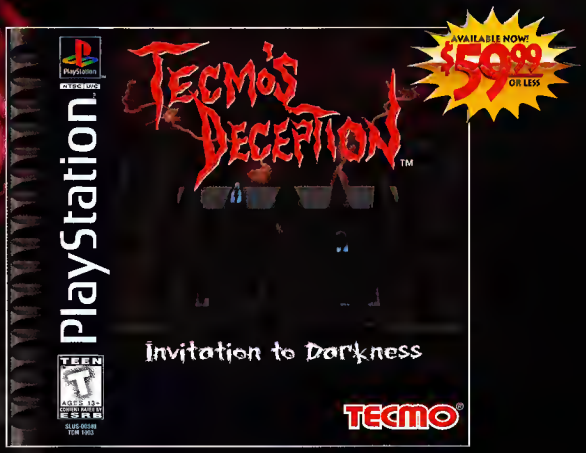

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